A VOYAGE OF CONSOLATION

MRS. EVERARD COTES
Sara Jeannette Duncan

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"Jamais!"

(See page 156.)

A VOYAGE OF CONSOLATION

(BEING IN THE NATURE OF
A SEQUEL TO THE EXPERIENCES OF
"AN AMERICAN GIRL IN LONDON")

BY

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN
(MRS. EVERARD COTES)

AUTHOR OF
A SOCIAL DEPARTURE, AN AMERICAN GIRL IN LONDON,
A DAUGHTER OF TO-DAY, VERNON'S AUNT, THE
STORY OF SONNY SAHIB, HIS HONOUR
AND A LADY, ETC.



ILLUSTRATED

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A VOYAGE OF CONSOLATION.

CHAPTER I.

It seems inexcusable to remind the public that one has written a book. Poppa says I ought not to feel that way about it—that he might just as well be shy about referring to the baking soda that he himself invented—but I do, and it is with every apology that I mention it. I once had such a good time in England that I printed my experiences, and at the very end of the volume it seemed necessary to admit that I was engaged to Mr. Arthur Greenleaf Page, of Yale College, Connecticut. I remember thinking this was indiscreet at the time, but I felt compelled to bow to the requirements of fiction. I was my own heroine, and I had to be disposed of. There seemed to be no alternative. I did not wish to marry Mr. Mafferton, even for literary purposes, and Peter Corke's suggestion, that I should cast myself overboard in mid-ocean at the mere idea of living anywhere out of England for the future, was autobiographically impossible even if I had felt so inclined. So I committed the indiscretion. In order that the world might be assured that my heroine married and lived happily ever

afterwards, I took it prematurely into my confidence regarding my intention. The thing that occurred, as naturally and inevitably as the rain if you leave your umbrella at home, was that within a fortnight after my return to Chicago my engagement to Mr. Page terminated; and the even more painful consequence is that I feel obliged on that account to refer to it again.

Even an American man has his lapses into unreasonableness. Arthur especially encouraged the idea of my going to England on the ground that it would be so formative. He said that to gaze upon the headsman's block in the Tower was in itself a liberal education. As we sat together in the drawing-room—momma and poppa always preferred the sitting-room when Arthur was there—he used to gild all our future with the culture which I should acquire by actual contact with the hoary traditions of Great Britain. He advised me earnestly to disembark at Liverpool in a receptive and appreciative, rather than a critical and antagonistic, state of mind, to endeavour to assimilate all that was worth assimilating over there, remembering that this might give me as much as I wanted to do in the time. I remember he expressed himself rather finely about the only proper attitude for Americans visiting England being that of magnanimity, and about the claims of kinship, only once removed, to our forbearance and affection. He put me on my guard, so to speak, about only one thing, and that was spelling. American spelling, he said, had become national, and attachment to it

ranked next to patriotism. Such words as "color," "program," "center," had obsolete English forms which I could only acquire at the sacrifice of my independence, and the surrender of my birthright to make such improvements upon the common language as I thought desirable. And I know that I was at some inconvenience to mention "color," "program," and "center," in several of my letters just to assure Mr. Page that my orthography was not in the least likely to be undermined.

Indeed, I took his advice at every point. I hope I do not presume in asking you to remember that I did. I know I was receptive, even to penny buns, and sometimes simply wild with appreciation. I found it as easy as possible to subdue the critical spirit, even in connection with things which I should never care to approve of. I shook hands with Lord Mafferton without the slightest personal indignation with him for being a peer, and remember thinking that if he had been a duke I should have had just the same charity for him. Indeed, I was sorry, and am still sorry, that during the four months I spent in England I didn't meet a single duke. This is less surprising than it looks, as they are known to be very scarce, and at least a quarter of a million Americans visit Great Britain every year; but I should like to have known one or two. As it was, four or five knights—knights are very thick—one baronet, Lord Mafferton, one marquis—but we had no conversation—one colonel of militia, one Lord Mayor, and a

Horse Guard, rank unknown, comprise my acquaintance with the aristocracy. A duke or so would have completed the set. And the magnanimity which I would so willingly have stretched to include a duke spread itself over other British institutions as amply as Arthur could have wished. When I saw things in Hyde Park on Sunday that I was compelled to find excuses for, I thought of the tyrant's iron heel; and when I was obliged to overlook the superiorities of the titled great, I reflected upon the difficulty of walking in iron heels without inconveniencing a prostrate population. I should defy anybody to be more magnanimous than I was.

As to the claims of kinship, only once removed, to our forbearance and affection, I never so much as sat out a dance on a staircase with Oddie Pratte without recognising them.

It seems almost incredible that Arthur should not have been gratified, but the fact remains that he was not. Anyone could see, after the first half hour, that he was not. During the first half hour it is, of course, impossible to notice anything. We had sunk to the level of generalities when I happened to mention Oddie.

"He had darker hair than you have, dear," I said, "and his eyes were blue. Not sky blue, or china blue, but a kind of sea blue on a cloudy day. He had rather good eyes," I added reminiscently.

"Had he?" said Arthur.

"But your noses," I went on reassuringly, "were not to be compared with each other."

"Oh!" said Arthur.

"He *was* so impulsive!" I couldn't help smiling a little at the recollection. "But for that matter they all were."

"Impulsive?" asked Arthur.

"Yes. Ridiculously so. They thought as little of proposing as of asking one to dance."

"Ah!" said Arthur.

"Of course, I never accepted any of them, even for a moment. But they had such a way of taking things for granted. Why one man actually thought I was engaged to him!"

"Really!" said Arthur. "May I inquire——"

"No, dear," I replied, "I think not. I couldn't tell anybody about it—for his sake. It was all a silly mistake. Some of them," I added thoughtfully, "were very stupid."

"Judging from the specimens that find their way over here," Arthur remarked, "I should say there was plenty of room in their heads for their brains."

Arthur was sitting on the other side of the fireplace, and by this time his expression was aggressive. I thought his remark unnecessarily caustic, but I did not challenge it.

"*Some* of them were stupid," I repeated, "but they were nearly all nice." And I went on to say that what Chicago people as a whole thought about it I didn't

know and I didn't care, but so far as *my* experience went the English were the loveliest nation in the world.

"A nation like a box of strawberries," Mr. Page suggested, "all the big ones on top, all the little ones at the bottom."

"That doesn't matter to us," I replied cheerfully, "we never get any further than the top. And you'll admit there's a great tendency for little ones to shake down. It's only a question of time. They've had so much time in England. You see the effects of it everywhere."

"Not at all. By no means. *Our* little strawberries rise," he declared.

"Do they? Dear me, so they do! I suppose the American law of gravity is different. In England they would certainly smile at that."

Arthur said nothing, but his whole bearing expressed a contempt for puns.

"Of course," I said, "I mean the loveliest nation after Americans."

I thought he might have taken that for granted. Instead, he looked incredulous and smiled, in an observing, superior way.

"Why do you say 'ahfter'?" he asked. His tone was sweetly acidulated.

"Why do you say 'affter'?" I replied simply.

"Because," he answered with quite unnecessary emphasis, "in the part of the world I come from every-

body says it. Because my mother has brought me up to say it."

"Oh," I said, looking at the lamp, "they say it like that in other parts of the world too. In Yorkshire—and such places. As far as *mothers* go, I must tell you that momma approves of my pronunciation. She likes it better than anything else I have brought back with me—even my tailor-mades—and thinks it wonderful that I should have acquired it in the time."

"Don't you think you could remember a little of your good old American? Doesn't it seem to come back to you?"

All the Wicks hate sarcasm, especially from those they love, and I certainly had not outgrown my fondness for Mr. Page at this time.

"It all came back to me, my dear Arthur," I said, "the moment you opened your lips!"

At that not only Mr. Page's features and his shirt front, but his whole personality seemed to stiffen. He sat up and made an outward movement on the seat of his chair which signified, "My hat and overcoat are in the hall, and if you do not at once retract——"

"Rather than allow anything to issue from them which would imply that I was not an American I would keep them closed for ever," he said.

"You needn't worry about that," I observed. "Nothing ever will. But I don't know why we should *glory* in talking through our noses." Involuntarily I

played with my engagement ring, slipping it up and down, as I spoke.

Arthur rose with an expression of tolerant amusement—entirely forced—and stood by the fireplace. He stood beside it, with his elbow on the mantelpiece, not in front of it with his legs apart, and I thought with a pang how much more graceful the American attitude was.

"Have you come back to tell us that we talk through our noses?" he asked.

"I don't like being called an Anglomaniac," I replied, dropping my ring from one finger to another. Fortunately I was sitting in a rocking chair—the only one I had not been able to persuade momma to have taken out of the drawing-room. The rock was a considerable relief to my nerves.

"I knew that the cockneys on the other side were fond of inventing fictions about what they are pleased to call the 'American accent,'" continued Mr. Page, with a scorn which I felt in the very heels of my shoes, "but I confess I thought you too patriotic to be taken in by them."

"Taken in by them" was hard to bear, but I thought if I said nothing at this point we might still have a peaceful evening. So I kept silence.

"Of course, I speak as a mere product of the American Constitution—a common unit of the democracy," he went on, his sentences gathering wrath as he rolled them out, "but if there were such a thing as an Ameri-

can accent, I think I've lived long enough, and patrolled this little Union of ours extensively enough, to hear it by this time. But it appears to be necessary to reside four months in England, mixing freely with earls and countesses, to detect it."

"Perhaps it is," I said, and I *may* have smiled.

"I should hate to pay the price."

Mr. Page's tone distinctly expressed that the society of earls and countesses would be, to him, contaminating.

Again I made no reply. I wanted the American accent to drop out of the conversation, if possible, but Fate had willed it otherwise.

"I sai, y'know, awfly hard luck, you're havin' to settle down amongst these barbarians again, bai Jove!"

I am not quite sure that it's a proper term for use in a book, but by this time I was *mad*. There was criticism in my voice, and a distinct chill as I said composedly, "You don't do it very well."

I did not look at him, I looked at the lamp, but there was that in the air which convinced me that we had arrived at a crisis.

"I suppose not. I'm not a marquis, nor the end man at a minstrel show. I'm only an American, like sixty million other Americans, and the language of Abraham Lincoln is good enough for me. But I suppose I, like the other sixty million, emit it through my nose!"

"I should be sorry to contradict you," I said.

Arthur folded his arms and gathered himself up

until he appeared to taper from his stem like a florist's bouquet, and all the upper part of him was pink and trembling with emotion. Arthur may one day attain corpulence; he is already well rounded.

"I need hardly say," he said majestically, "that when I did myself the honour of proposing, I was under the impression that I had a suitable larynx to offer you."

"You see I didn't know," I murmured, and by accident I dropped my engagement ring, which rolled upon the carpet at his feet. He stooped and picked it up.

"Shall I take this with me?" he asked, and I said "By all means."

That was all.

I gave ten minutes to reflection and to the possibility of Arthur's coming back and pleading, on his knees, to be allowed to restore that defective larynx. Then I went straight upstairs to the telephone and rang up the Central office. When they replied "*Hello,*" I said, in the moderate and concentrated tone which we all use through telephones, "Can you give me New York?"

Poppa was in New York, and in an emergency poppa and I always turn to one another. There was a delay, during which I listened attentively, with one eye closed —I believe it is the sign of an unbalanced intellect to shut one eye when you use the telephone, but I needn't go into that—and presently I got New York. In a few minutes more I was accommodated with the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

"Mr. T. P. Wick, of Chicago," I demanded.

"*Is his room number Sixty-two?*"

That is the kind of mind which you usually find attached to the New York end of a trans-American telephone. But one does not bandy words across a thousand miles of country with a hotel clerk, so I merely responded:

"Very probably."

There was a pause, and then the still small voice came again.

"*Mr. Wick is in bed at present. Anything important?*"

I reflected that while I in Chicago was speaking to the hotel clerk at half-past nine o'clock, the hotel clerk in New York was speaking to me at eleven. This in itself was enough to make our conversation disjointed.

"Yes," I responded, "it is important. Ask Mr. Wick to get out of bed."

Sufficient time elapsed to enable poppa to put on his clothes and come down by the elevator, and then I heard:

"*Mr. Wick is now speaking.*"

"Yes, poppa," I replied, "I guess you are. Your old American accent comes singing across in a way that no member of your family would ever mistake. But you needn't be stiff about it. Sorry to disturb you."

Poppa and I were often personal in our intercourse. I had not the slightest hesitation in mentioning his American accent.

"*Hello, Mamie! Don't mention it. What's up? House on fire? Water pipes burst? Strike in the kitchen? Sound the alarm—send for the plumber—raise Gladys's wages and sack Marguerite.*"

"My engagement to Mr. Page is broken. Do you get me? What do you suggest?"

I heard a whistle, which I cannot express in italics, and then, confidentially:

"*You don't say so! Bad break?*"

"Very," I responded firmly.

"*Any details of the disaster available? What?*"

"Not at present," I replied, for it would have been difficult to send them by telephone.

I could hear poppa considering the matter at the other end. He coughed once or twice and made some indistinct inquiries of the hotel clerk. Then he called my attention again.

"*Hello!*" he said. "*On to me? All right. Go abroad. Always done. Paris, Venice, Florence, Rome, and the other places. I'll stand in. Germanic sails Wednesdays. Start by night train to-morrow. Bring momma. We can get Germanic in good shape and ten minutes to spare. Right?*"

"Right," I responded, and hung up the handle. I did not wish to keep poppa out of bed any longer than was necessary, he was already up so much later than I was. I turned away from the instrument to go down stairs again, and there, immediately behind me, stood momma.

"Well, really!" I exclaimed. It did not occur to me that the privacy of telephonic communication between Chicago and New York was not inviolable. Besides, there are moments when one feels a little annoyed with one's momma for having so lightly undertaken one's existence. This was one of them. But I decided not to express it.

"I was only going to say," I remarked, "that if I had shrieked it would have been your fault."

"I knew everything," said momma, "the minute I heard him shut the gate. I came up immediately, and all this time, dear, you've been confiding in us both. My dear daughter."

Momma carries about with her a well-spring of sentiment, which she did not bequeath to me. In that respect I take almost entirely after my other parent.

"Very well," I said, "then I won't have to do it again."

Her look of disappointment compelled me to speak with decision. "I know what you would like at this juncture, momma. You'd like me to get down on the floor and put my head in your lap and weep all over your new brocade. That's what you'd really enjoy. But, under circumstances like these, I never do things like that. Now the question is, can you get ready to start for Europe to-morrow night, or have you a headache coming on?"

Momma said that she expected Mrs. Judge Simmons to tea to-morrow afternoon, that she hadn't been think-

ing of it, and that she was out of nerve tincture. At least, these were her principal objections. I said, on mature consideration, I didn't see why Mrs. Simmons shouldn't come to tea, that there were twenty-four hours for all necessary thinking, and that a gallon of nerve tincture, if required, could be at her disposal in ten minutes.

"Being Protestants," I added, "I suppose a convent wouldn't be of any use to us—what do you think?"

Momma thought she could go.

There was no need for hurry, and I attended to only one other matter before I went to bed. That was a communication to the *Herald*, which I sent off in plenty of time to appear in the morning. It was addressed to the Society Editor, and ran as follows:

"The marriage arranged between Professor Arthur Greenleaf Page, of Yale University, and Miss Mamie Wick, of 1453, Lakeside-avenue, Chicago, will not take place. Mr. and Mrs. Wick, and Miss Wick, sail for Europe on Wednesday by s.s. Germanic."

I reflected, as I closed my eyes, that Arthur was a regular reader of the *Herald*.

CHAPTER II.

We met poppa on the Germanic gangway, his hat on the back of his head and one finger in each of his waistcoat pockets, an attitude which, with him, always betokens concern. The vessel was at that stage of departure when the people who have been turned off are feeling injured that it should have been done so soon, and apparently only the weight of poppa's personality on its New York end kept the gangway out. As we drove up he appeared to lift his little finger and three dishevelled navigators darted upon the cab. They and we and our trunks swept up the gangway together, which immediately closed behind us, under the direction of an extremely irritated looking Chief Officer. We reunited as a family as well as we could in connection with uncoiled ropes and ship discipline. Then poppa, with his watch in his hand, exclaimed reproachfully, well in hearing of the Chief Officer, "I gave you ten minutes and you *had* ten minutes. You stopped at Huyler's for candy, I'll lay my last depreciated dollar on it."

My other parent looked guiltily at some oblong boxes tied up in white paper with narrow red ribbon, which,

innocently enough I consider, enhance the value of life to us both. But she ignored the charge—momma hates arguments.

"Dear me!" she said, as the space widened between us and the docks. "So we are all going to Europe together this morning! I can hardly realise it. Farewell America! How interesting life is."

"Yes," replied poppa. "And now I guess I'd better show you your cabins before it gets any more interesting."

We had a calm evening, though nothing would induce momma to think so, and at ten o'clock Senator J. P. Wick and I were still pacing the deck talking business. The moon rose, and threw Arthur's shadow across our conversation, but we looked at it with precision and it moved away. That is one of poppa's most comforting characteristics, he would as soon open his bosom to a shot-gun as to a confidence. He asked for details through the telephone merely for bravado. As a matter of fact, if I had begun to send them he would have rung off the connection and said it was an accident. We dipped into politics, and I told the Senator that while I considered his speech on the Silver Compromise a credit to the family on the whole, I thought he had let himself out somewhat unnecessarily at the expense of the British nation.

"We are always twisting a tail," I said reproachfully, "that does nothing but wag at us."

This poppa reluctantly admitted with the usual refer-

ence to the Irish vote. We both hoped sincerely that any English friends who saw that speech, and paused to realise that the orator was a parent of mine, would consider the number of Irish resident in Illinois, and the amount of invective which their feelings require. Poppa doesn't really know sometimes whether he is himself or a shillelagh, but whatever his temporary political capacity he is never ungrateful. He went on to give me the particulars of his interview with the President about the Chicago Post Office, and then I gradually unfolded my intention of preparing our foreign experiences as a family for publication in book form. While I was unfolding it poppa eyed me askance.

"Is that usual?" he inquired.

"Very usual indeed," I replied.

"I mean—under the circumstances?"

"Under what circumstances?" I demanded boldly. I knew that nothing would induce him to specify them.

"Oh, I only meant—it wasn't exactly my idea."

"What was your idea—exactly?" It was mean of me to put poppa to the blush, but I had to define the situation.

"Oh," said he, with unlooked-for heroism, "I was basing my calculations with reference to you on the distractions of change—Paris dry-goods, rowing round Venice in gondolas, riding through the St. Gothard tunnel, and the healing hand of time. I don't intend to give a day less than six weeks to it. I'm looking forward to the tranquilising effect of the antique some

myself," he added, hedging. "I find these new self-risers that we've undertaken to carry almost more than my temperament can stand. They went up from an output of five hundred dollars to six hundred and fifty thousand, and back again inside seven days last month. I'm looking forward to examining something that hasn't moved for a couple of thousand years with considerable pleasure."

"Poppa," said I, ignoring the self-risers, "if you were as particular about the quality of your fiction as you are about the quality of your table-butter, you would know that the best heroines never have recourse to such measures now. They are simply obsolete. Except for my literary intention, I should be ashamed to go to Europe at all—under the circumstances. But that, you see, brings the situation up to date. I transmit my European impressions through the prism of damaged affection. Nothing could be more modern."

"I see," replied poppa, rubbing his chin searchingly, which is his manner of expressing sagacious doubt. His beard descends from the lower part of his chin in the long unfettered American manner, without which it is impossible for *Punch* to indicate a citizen of the United States. When he positively disapproves he pulls it severely.

"But Europe's been done before, you know," he continued. "In fact, I don't know any continent more popular than Europe with people that want to publish books of travel. It's been done before."

"Never," I rejoined, "in connection with you, poppa!"

Poppa removed his hand from his chin.

"Oh, if I'm to assist, that's quite another anecdote," he said briskly. "I didn't understand you intended to ring me in. Of course, I don't mean to imply there is any special *prej*udice against books of travel in Europe. About how many pages did you think of running it to?"

"My idea was three hundred," I replied.

"And how many words to a page?"

"Two hundred and fifty—more or less."

"That's seventy-five thousand words! Pretty big undertaking, if you look at it in bulk."

"We shall have to rely upon momma," I remarked.

Poppa's expression disparaged the idea, and he began to feel round for his beard.

"If I were you," he said, "I wouldn't place much dependence on momma. She'll be able to give you a few hints on sunsets and a pointer or two about the various Venuses, likely—she's had photographs of several of them in the house for years—but I expect it's going to be a question of historical fact pretty often, and momma won't be in it. Not that I want to choke momma off," he continued, "but she will necessitate a whole reference library. And in some parts of Europe I believe they charge you for every pound of luggage, including your lunch, if you don't happen to have concealed it in your person."

"We'll have to pin her down to the guide-books," I remarked.

"That depends. I've always understood that the guide-book market was largely controlled by Mr. Murray and Mr. Baedeker. Also, that Mr. Murray writes in a vein of pretty lofty sentiment, while Mr. Baedeker is about as interesting as a directory. Now where the right emotion is included at the price I don't see the use of momma, but when it's a question of Baedeker we might turn her on. See?"

"Poppa," I replied with emotion, "you will both be invaluable. I will bid you good-night. I believe the electric light burns all night long in the smoking-cabin, but that is not supposed to indicate that gentlemen are expected to stay there till dawn. I see you have two Havanas left. That will be quite enough for one evening. Good-night, poppa."

CHAPTER III.

All the way across momma implored me to become reconciled to Arthur. In extreme moments, when it was very choppy, she composed telegrams on lines which were to drive him wild with contrition without compromising my dignity; and when I suggested the difficulty of tampering with the Atlantic cable in mid-ocean without a diving machine, she wept, hinting that, if I were a true daughter of hers, things would never have come to such a pass. My position, from a filial point of view, was most trying. I could not deny my responsibility for momma's woes—she never left her cabin—yet I was powerless to put an end to them. Young women in novels have thrown themselves into the arms of the wrong man under far less parental pressure, but although it was indeed the hour the man was not available. Neither, such was the irony of circumstances, would our immediate union have affected the motion in the slightest degree. But although I presented these considerations to momma many times a day, she adhered so persistently to the idea of promoting a happy reunion that I was obliged to keep a very careful eye on the possibility of surreptitious messages from Liver-

pool. Once on dry land, however, momma saw her duty in another light. I might say that she swallowed her principles with the first meal she really enjoyed, after which she expressed her conviction that it was best to let the dead past bury its dead, so long as the obsequies did not necessitate her immediate return to America.

I was looking forward immensely to observing the Senator in London, remembering the effect it had upon my own imagination, but on our arrival he conducted himself in a manner which can only be described as non-committal. He went about with his hands in his pockets, smoking large cigars with an air of reserved criticism that vastly impressed the waiters, acquiescing in strawberry jam for breakfast, for example, in a manner which said that, although this might be to him a new and complex custom, he was acquainted with Chicago ones much more recondite. His air was superior, but modestly so, and if he said nothing you would never suppose it was because he had nothing to say. He meant to give Great Britain a chance before he pronounced anything distinctly unfavourable even to her steaks, and in the meantime to remember what an up-to-date American owes to his country's reputation in the hotels of a foreign town.

He was very much at his ease, and I saw him looking at a couple of just introduced Englishmen embarking in conversation, as if he wondered what could possibly be the matter with them. I am sorry that I can't

say as much for my other parent, but before monarchical institutions momma weakened. She had moments of terrible indecision as to how to do her hair, and I am certain it was not a matter of indifference to her that she should make a good impression upon the head butler. Also, she hesitated about examining the mounted Guardsman on duty at Whitehall, preferring to walk past with a casual glance, as if she were accustomed to see things quite as wonderful every day at home, whereas nothing to approach it has ever existed in America, except in the imagination of Mr. Barnum, and he is dead. And shopwalkers patronised her. I congratulated myself sometimes that I was there to assert her dignity.

I must be permitted to generalise in this way about our London experiences because they only lasted a day and a half, and it is impossible to get many particulars into that space. It was really a pity we had so little time. Nothing would have been more interesting than to bring momma into contact with the Poets' Corner, or introduce poppa to the House of Lords, and watch the effect. I am sure, from what I know of my parents, that the effect would have been crisp. But we decided that six weeks was not too much to give to the Continent, also that an opportunity, six weeks long, of absorbing Europe is not likely to occur twice in the average American lifetime. We stayed over two or three trains in London, however, just long enough to get in a background, as it were, for our Continental experiences.

The weather was typical, and the background, from an artistic point of view, was perfect. While not precisely opaque, you couldn't see through it anywhere.

When it became a question of how we were to put in the time, it seemed to momma as if she would rather lie down than anything.

"You and your father, dear," she said, "might drive to St. Paul's, when it stops raining. Have a good look at the dome and try to bring me back the sound of the echo. It is said to be very weird. See that poppa doesn't forget to take off his hat in the body of the church, but he might put it on in the Whispering Gallery, where it is sure to be draughty. And remember that the funeral coach of the Duke of Wellington is down in the crypt, darling. You might bring me an impression of that. I think I'll have a cup of chocolate and try to get a little sleep."

"Is it," asked poppa, "the coach which the Duke sent to represent him at the other people's funerals, or the one in which he attended his own?"

"You can look that up," momma replied; "but my belief is that it was presented to the Duke by a grateful nation after his demise. In which case he couldn't possibly have used it more than once."

I looked at momma reprovingly, but, seeing that she had no suspicion of being humorous, I said nothing. The Senator pushed out his under lip and pulled his beard.

"I don't know about St. Paul's," he said; "wouldn't

any other impression do as well, momma? It doesn't seem to be just the weather for crypts, and I don't suppose the hearse of a military man is going to make the surroundings any more cheerful. Now, my idea is that when time is limited you've got to let some things go. I'd let the historical go every time. I'd let the instructive go—we can't drag around an idea of the British Museum, for instance. I'd let ancient associations go —unless you're particularly interested in the parties associated."

I thought of the morning I once spent picking up details, traditions, and remains of Dr. Johnson in various parts of the West Central district, and privately sympathised with this view, though I felt compelled to look severe. Momma, who was now lying down, dissented. What, then, she demanded, had we crossed the ocean for?

"Rather," said she, "where time is limited let us spread ourselves, so to speak, over the area of culture available. This morning, for example, you, husband, might ramble round the Tower and try to picture the various tragedies that have been enacted there. You, daughter, might go and bring us those impressions from St. Paul's, while I will content myself with observing the manners of the British chambermaid. So far, I must say, I think they are lovely. Thus, each doing what he can and she can, we shall take back with us, as a family, more real benefit than we could possibly obtain if we all derived it from the same source."

"No," said poppa firmly. "I take exception to your theory right there, Augusta. Culture is a very harmless thing, and there's no reason why you shouldn't take it in, till your back gives out, every day we're here. But I consider that we've got the article in very good shape in our little town over there in Illinois, and personally I don't propose to go nosing round after it in Europe. And as a family man I should hate to be divided up for any such purpose."

"Oh, if you're going to steel yourself against it, my love——"

"Now, what Bramley said to me the day before we sailed was this—No, I'm not steeling myself against it; my every pore is open to it—Bramley said: 'Your time is limited, you can't see everything. Very well. See the unique. Keep that in mind,' he said; 'the unique. And you'll be surprised to find how very little there is in the world, outside Chicago, that *is* unique.'

"Applying that rule," continued the Senator, strolling up and down, "the things to see in London are the Crystal Palace and the Albert Memorial. Especially the Albert Memorial. That was a man who played second fiddle to his wife, and enjoyed it, all his life long; and there he sits in Hyde Park to-day, I understand, still receiving the respectful homage of the nation—the only case on record."

"Westminster Abbey would be much better *for* you," said momma.

"Don't you think," I put in, "that if momma is to get any sleep——"

"Certainly. Now, another thing that Bramley said was, 'Look here,' he said, 'remember the Unattainable Elsewhere—and get it. You're likely to be in London. Now the Unattainable Elsewhere, for that town, is gentlemen's suitings. For style, price, and quality of goods the London tailor leads the known universe. Wick,' he said—he was terribly in earnest—'if you have *one hour* in London, leave your measure!'"

"In that case," said momma, sitting up and ascertaining the condition of her hair, "you would like me to be with you, love."

Now, if momma doesn't like poppa's clothes, she always gives them away without telling him. This would be thought arbitrary in England, and I have certainly known the Senator suddenly reduced to great destitution through it, but America is a free country, and there is no law to compel us to see our male relations unbecomingly clad against our will.

"Well, to tell the truth, Augusta," said poppa, "I would. I'd like to get this measure through by a unanimous vote. It will save complications afterwards. But are you sure you wouldn't rather lie down?"

Momma replied to the effect that she wouldn't mind his going anywhere else alone, but this was important. She put her gloves on as she spoke, and her manner expressed that she was equal to any personal sacrifice for the end in view.

Colonel Bramley had given the Senator a sartorial address of repute, and presently the hansom drew up before it, in Piccadilly. We went about as a family in one hansom for sociability.

"Look here, driver," said poppa through the roof, "have we got there?"

The cabman, in a dramatic and resentful manner, pointed out the number with his whip.

"There's the address as was given to *me*, sir."

"Well, there's nothing to get mad about," said poppa sternly. "I'm looking for Marcus Trippit, tailor and outfitter."

"It's all right, sir. All on the brass plite on the door, sir. I can see it puffickly from 'ere."

The cabman seemed appeased, but his tone was still remonstrative.

We all looked at the door with the brass plate. It was flanked on one side by the offices of a house agent, on the other by a superior looking restaurant.

"There isn't the sign of a tailor about the premises," said poppa, "except his name. I don't like the look of that."

"Perhaps," suggested momma, "it's his private address."

"Well, I guess we don't want to call on Marcus, especially as we've got no proper introduction. Driver, that isn't Mr. Trippit's place of business. It's his home."

We all craned up at the hole in the roof at once,

like young birds, and we all distinctly saw the driver smile.

"No, sir, I don't think 'e'd put it up like that that 'e was a tyler, not on 'is privit residence, sir. I think you'll find the business premises on the fust or second floor, likely."

"Where's his window?" the Senator demanded. "Where's his display? No, I don't think Marcus will do for me. I'm not confiding enough. Now, *you* don't happen to be able to recommend a tailor, do you?"

"Yes, sir, I can take you to a gentleman that'll turn you out as 'andsome as need be. Out 'Ampstead way, '*e* is."

The Senator smiled. "About a three-and-sixpenny fare, eh?" he said.

"Yes, sir, all of that."

"I thought so. I don't mind the three and sixpence. You can't do much driving where I come from under a dollar; but we've only got about twenty-four hours for the British capital altogether, and I can't spare the time."

"Suppose he drives along slowly," suggested momma.

"Just so. Drive along slowly until you come to a tailor that has a shop, do you see? And a good-sized window, with waxwork figures in it to show off the goods. Then let me hear from you again."

The man's expression changed to one of cheerfulness and benignity. "Right you are, sir," he said, and

shut down the door in a manner that suggested entire appreciation of the circumstances.

"I think we can trust him," said poppa. Inside, therefore, we gave ourselves up to enjoyment of what momma called the varied panorama around us; while, outside, the cabman passed in critical review half the gentleman's outfitters in London. It was momma who finally brought him to a halt, and the establishment which inspired her with confidence and emulation was inscribed in neat, white enamelled letters, *Court Tailors.*

As we entered, a person of serious appearance came forward from the rear, by no means eagerly or inquiringly, but with a grave step and a great deal of deportment. I fancy he looked at momma and me with slight surprise; then, with his hands calmly folded and his head a little on one side, he gave his attention to the Senator. But it was momma who broke the silence.

"We wish," said momma, "to look at gentlemen's suitings."

"Yes, madam, certainly. Is it for—for——" He hesitated in the embarrassed way only affected in the very best class of establishments, and I felt at ease at once as to the probable result.

"For this gentleman," said momma, with a wave of her hand.

The Senator, being indicated, acknowledged it. "Yes," he said, "I'm your subject. But there's just one thing I want to say. I haven't got any use for a Court suit, because where I live we haven't got any use

for Courts. My idea would be something aristocratic in quality but democratic in cut—the sort of thing you would make up for a member of Mr. Gladstone's family. Do I make myself clear?"

"Certainly, sir. Ordinary morning dress, sir, or is it evening dress, or both? Will you kindly step this way, sir?"

"We will all step this way," said momma.

"It would be a morning coat and waistcoat then, sir, would it not? And trousers of a different—somewhat lighter——"

"Well, no," the Senator replied. "Something I could wear around pretty much all day."

My calm regard forbade the gentleman's outfitter to smile, even in the back of his head.

"I think I understand, sir. Now, here is something that is being a good deal worn just now. Beautiful finish."

"Nothing *brown*ish, thank you," said momma, with decision.

"No, madam? Then perhaps you would prefer this, sir. More on the iron gray, sir."

"That would certainly be more becoming," said momma. "And I like that invisible line. But it's rather too woolly. I'm afraid it wouldn't keep its appearance. What do you think, Mamie?"

"Oh, there's no *wool*liness, madam." The gentleman's outfitter's tone implied that wool was the last thing he would care to have anything to do with. "It's

the nap. And as to the *appear*ance of these goods"—he smiled slightly—"well, we put our reputation on them, that's all. I can't say more than that. But I have the same thing in a smooth finish, if you would prefer it."

"I think I would prefer it. Wouldn't you, Mamie?"

The man brought the same thing in a smooth finish, and looked interrogatively at poppa.

"Oh, I prefer it, too," said he, with a profound assumption of intelligent interest. "Were you thinking of having the pants made of the same material, Augusta?"

The gentleman's outfitter suddenly turned his back, and stood thus for an instant struggling with something like a spasm. Knowing that if there's one thing in the world momma hates it's the exhibition of poppa's sense of humour, I walked to the door. When I came back they were measuring the Senator.

"Will you have the American shoulder, sir? Most of our customers prefer it."

"Well, no. The English shoulder would be more of a novelty on me. You see I come from the United States myself."

"Do you indeed, sir?"

The manners of some tailors might be emulated in England.

"Tails are a little longer than they were, sir, and waistcoats cut a trifle higher. Not more than half an inch in both cases, sir, but it does make a difference.

Now, with reference to the coat, sir; will you have it finished with braid or not? Silk braid, of course, sir."

"Augusta?" demanded the Senator.

"Is braid *de nouveau?*" asked momma.

"Not precisely, madam, but the Prince certainly has worn it this season while he didn't last."

"Do you refer to Wales?" asked poppa.

"Yes, sir. He's very generally mentioned simply as 'The Prince.' His Royal Highness is very conservative, so to speak, about such things, so when he takes up a style we generally count on its lasting at least through one season. I can assure you, sir, the Prince has appeared in braid. You needn't be afraid to order it."

"I think," put in momma, "that braid would make a very neat finish, love."

Poppa walked slowly towards the door, considering the matter. With his hand on the knob he turned round.

"No," he said, "I don't think that's reason enough for me. We're both men in public positions, but I've got nothing in common with Wales. I'll have a plain hem."

CHAPTER IV.

"If there's one thing I hate," said Senator Wick several times in the discussion of our plans, "it's to see a citizen of the United States going round advertising himself. If you analyse it, it's a mean thing to do, for it's no more a virtue to be born American than a fault to be born anything else. I'm proud of my nationality and my income is a source of satisfaction to me, but I don't intend to brandish either of them in the face of Europe."

It was this principle that had induced poppa to buy tourist tickets second class by rail, first class by steamer, all through, like ordinary English people on eight or nine hundred a year. Momma and I thought it rather noble of him and resolved to live up to it if possible, but when he brought forth a large packet of hotel coupons, guaranteed to produce everything, including the deepest respect of the proprietors, at ten shillings and sixpence a day apiece, we thought he was making an unnecessary sacrifice to the feelings of the non-American travelling public.

"Two dollars and a half a day!" momma ejaculated. "Were there no more expensive ones?"

"If there had been," poppa confessed, "I would have taken them. But these were the best they had. And I understand it's a popular, sensible way of travelling. I told the young man that the one thing we wished to avoid was ostentation, and he said that these coupons would be a complete protection."

"There must be *some* way of paying more," said momma pathetically, looking at the paper books of tickets, held together by a quantity of little holes. "Do they actually include everything?"

"Even wine, I understand, where it is the custom of the hotel to provide it without extra charge, and in Switzerland honey with your breakfast," the Senator responded firmly. "I never made a more interesting purchase. There before us lie our beds, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, lights, and attendance for the next six weeks."

"It is full of the most dramatic possibilities," I remarked, looking at the packet.

"It seems to me a kind of attempt to coerce Providence," said momma, "as much as to say, 'Whatever happens to the world, I am determined to have my bed, breakfast, luncheon, dinner, lights, and attendance for six weeks to come.' Is it not presumptuous?"

"It's very reasonable," said the Senator, "and that's the principal thing you've got against it, Augusta. It's remarkably, pictorially cheap." The Senator put the little books in their detachable cover, snapped the elastic round them and restored the whole to his inside pocket.

"You might almost say enjoyably cheap, if you know what I mean. The inexpensiveness of Europe," he continued, "is going to be a great charm for me. I intend to revel in it."

I am always discovering points about poppa the existence of which I had not suspected. His appreciation of the joy of small prices had been concealed in him up to this date, and I congratulated him warmly upon its appearance. I believe it is inherent in primitive tribes and in all Englishmen, but protective tariffs and other influences are rapidly eradicating it in Americans, who should be condoled with on this point, more than they usually are.

We were on our way to Paris after a miraculous escape of the Channel. So calm it was that we had almost held our breaths in our anxiety lest the wind should rise before we got over. Dieppe lay behind us, and momma at the window declared that she could hardly believe she was looking out at Normandy. Momma at the window was enjoying herself immensely in the midst of Liberty silk travelling cushions, supported by her smelling-bottle, and engaged apparently in the realisation of long-cherished dreams.

"There they are in a row!" she exclaimed. "How lovely to see them standing up in that stiff, unnatural way just as they do in the pictures."

Poppa and I rushed raptly to the window, but discovered nothing remarkable.

"To see what, Augusta?" demanded he.



Momma was enjoying herself.

"The Normandy poplars, love. Aren't you awfully disappointed in them? I am. So wooden!"

Poppa said he didn't know that he had been relying much on the poplar feature of the scenery, and returned to his weary search for American telegrams in a London daily paper.

"Dear me," momma ejaculated, "I *never* supposed I should see them doing it! And right along the line of the railway, too!"

"See them doing it!" I repeated, searching the landscape.

"The women working in the fields, darling love. Garnering the grain, all in that nice moderate shade of blue-electric, shouldn't you call it? There—there's another! No, you can't see her now. France *is* fascinating!"

Poppa abruptly folded the newspaper. "I've learnt a great deal more than I wanted to know about Madagascar," said he, "and I understand that there's a likelihood of the London voter being called to arms to prevent High Church trustees introducing candles and incense into the opening exercises of the public schools. I've read eleven different accounts of a battle in Korea, and an article on the fauna and flora of Beluchistan, very well written. And I see it's stated, on good authority, that the Queen drove out yesterday accompanied by the Princess Beatrice. I don't know that I ever got more information for two cents in my life. But for news—Great Scott! I *know* more news than there is

in that paper! The editor ought to be invited to come over and discover America."

"Here's something about America," I protested, "from Chicago, too. A whole column—'Movements of Cereals.'"

"Yes, and look at that for a nice attractive headline," responded the Senator with sarcasm. "'Movements of Cereals!' Gives you a great idea of pace, doesn't it? Why couldn't they have called it 'Grain on the Go'?"

"Did Mr. McConnell get in for Mayor, or Jimmy Fagan?" I inquired, looking down the column.

"They don't seem to have asked anybody."

"And who got the Post Office?"

"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Oh!" said momma at the window, "these little gray-stone villages are too sweet for words. Why talk of Chicago? Mr. McConnell and Mr. Fagan are all very well at home, but now that the ocean heaves between us, and your political campaign is over, may we not forget them?"

"Forget Mike McConnell and Jimmy Fagan!" replied the Senator, regarding a passing church spire with an absent smile. "Well, no, Augusta; as far as I'm concerned I'm afraid it couldn't be done—at all permanently. There's too much involved. But I see what you mean about turning the mind out to pasture when the grazing is interesting—getting in a cud, so to speak, for reflection afterwards. I see your idea."

The Senator is always business-like. He immediately addressed himself through the other window to the appreciation of the scenery, and I felt, as I took out my note-book to record one or two impressions, that he would do it justice.

"No, momma," I was immediately compelled to exclaim, "you mustn't look over my shoulder. It is paralysing to the imagination."

"Then I won't, dear. But oh, if you could only describe it as it is! The ruined chateaux, tree-embosomed——" Momma paused.

"The gray church spires, from which at eventide the Angelus comes pealing—or stealing," she continued. "Perhaps 'stealing' is better.

"Above all the poplars—the poplars are very characteristic, dear. And the women toilers in the sunset fields garnering up the golden grain. You might exclaim, 'Why are they always in blue?' Have you got that down?"

"They were making hay," poppa corrected. "But I suppose the public won't know the difference, any more than you did."

Momma leaned forward, clasping her smelling-bottle, and looked out of the window with a smile of exaltation.

"The cows," she went on, "the proud-legged Norman cows standing knee-deep in the quiet pools. Have you got the cows down, dear?"

The Senator, at the other window, looked across dis-

paragingly, hard at work on his beard. He said nothing, but after a time abruptly thrust his hands in his pockets, and his feet out in front of him in a manner which expressed absolute dissent. When momma said she thought she would try to get a little sleep he looked round observantly, and as soon as her slumber was sound and comfortable he beckoned to me.

"See here," he said, not unkindly, argumentatively. "About those cows. In fact, about all these pointers your mother's been giving you. They're all very nice and poetic—I don't want to run down momma's ideas—but they don't strike me as original. I won't say I could put my finger on it, but I'm perfectly certain I've heard of the poplars and the women field labourers of Normandy somewhere before. She doesn't do it on purpose"—the Senator inclined his head with deprecation toward the sleeping form opposite, and lowered his voice—"and I don't know that I'd mention it to you under any other circumstances, but momma's a fearful plagiarist. She doesn't hesitate anywhere. I've known her do it to William Shakespeare and the Book of Job, let alone modern authors. In dealing with her suggestions you want to be very careful. Otherwise momma'll get you into trouble."

I nodded with affectionate consideration. "I'll make a note of what you say, Senator," I replied, and immediately, from motives of delicacy, we changed the subject. As we talked, poppa told me in confidence how much he expected of the democratic idea in Paris. He

said that even the short time we had spent in England was enough to enable him to detect the subserviency of the lower classes there and to resent it, as a man and a brother. He spoke sadly and somewhat bitterly of the manners of the brother man who shaved him, which he found unjustifiably affable, and of the inexcusable abasement of a British railway porter if you gave him a shilling. He said he was glad to leave England, it was demoralising to live there; you lost your sense of the dignity of labour, and in the course of time you were almost bound to degenerate into a swell. He expressed a good deal of sympathy with the aristocracy on this account, concentrating his indignation upon those who, as it were, made aristocrats of innocent human beings against their will. It was more than he would have ventured to say in public, but in talking to me poppa often mentions what a comfort it is to be his own mouthpiece.

"The best thing about these tourists' tickets is," said the Senator as we approached Paris, "that they entitle you to the use of an interpreter. He is said to be found on all station platforms of importance, and I presume he's standing there waiting for us now. I take it we're at liberty to tap his knowledge of the language in any moment of difficulty just as if it were our own."

Ten minutes later the carriage doors were opening upon Paris, and the Senator's eagle eye was searching the crowded platform for this official. Our vague idea was that the interpreter would be a conspicuous and permanent object like a nickle-in-the-slot machine, auto-

matically arranged to open his arms to tourists presenting the right tickets, and emit conversation. When we finally detected him, by his cap, he was shifting uneasily in the midst of a crowd of inquirers. His face was pale, his beard pointed, his expression that of a person constantly interrupted in many languages. The crowd was parting to permit him to escape, when we filled up the available avenue and confronted him.

"Are you the linguist that goes with our tickets?" asked the Senator.

"I am ze interpretare yes, but weez ze tickets I go not, no. All-ways I stay here in zis place, nowheres I go." He stood at bay, so to speak, frowning fiercely as he replied, and then made another bolt for liberty, but poppa laid a compelling hand upon his arm.

"If it's all the same to you," said poppa, firmly, "I've got ladies with me, and——"

"Yes certainly you get presently your tronks. You see zat door beside many people? Immediately it open you go and show ze customs man. You got no duty thing, it is all right. You call one fiacre—carriage—and go at your hotel."

"Oh," exclaimed momma, "is there any charge on nerve tincture, please? It's *entirely* for my personal use."

"It's *only* on cigars and eau-de-Cologne, isn't it?" I entreated.

"Which door did you say?" asked the Senator. "I'd be obliged if you would speak more slowly. There's

no cause for excitement. From here I can see fourteen doors, and I saw our luggage go in by *this* door."

"You don't believe wat I say! Very well! All ze same it is zat door beside all ze people wat want zere tronks!"

"All right," said the Senator pacifically. "How you do boil over! I tell you one thing, my friend," he added, as the interpreter washed his hands of us, "you may be a necessity to the travelling public, but you're not a luxury, in any sense of the word."

CHAPTER V.

The Senator, discovering to his surprise that the hotel clerk was a lady, lifted his hat. He did not appear to be surprised, that wasn't the Senator's way, but he forgot what he had to say, which proved it. While he was hesitating she looked at him humorously and said "Good evening, sir!" She was a florid person who wore this sense of humour between hard blue eyes and an iron jaw. Momma took a passionate dislike to her on the spot.

"Oh, then you do," said poppa. "You parlay Anglay. That's a good thing I'm sure, for I know mighty little Fransay. May I ask what sort of accommodation you can give Mrs. Wick, Miss Wick, and myself for to-night? Anything on the first floor?"

"What rooms you require are one double one single, yes? Certainly. Francois, *trente-cinq et trente-huit.*" She handed Francois the keys and her sense of humour disappeared in a smile which told poppa that he might, if he liked, consider her a fine woman. He, wishing doubtless to bask in it to the fullest extent, produced his book of tickets.

"I expect you've seen these before," he said, ap-



"I expect you've seen these before."

parently for the pleasure of continuing the conversation.

As her eye fell upon them a look of startled cynicism suddenly replaced the smile. Her cynicism was paradoxical, she was so large, and sound and wholesome, and the more irritating on this account.

"You 'ave the coupons!" she exclaimed. "Ah-a-ah!" in a crescendo of astonishment at our duplicity. "Then I 'ave made one mistake. Francois! Those first floor rooms they are already taken. But on the third floor are two good beautiful rooms. There is also the lift—you can use the lift."

"I can't dispute with a lady," said poppa, "but that is singular. I should prefer those first floor rooms which were not taken until I mentioned the coupons."

"Sare!"

The lady's eye was unflinching, and poppa quailed. He looked ashamed, as if he had been caught in telling a story. They made a picture, as he stood there pulling his beard, of American chivalry and Gallic guile, which was almost pathetic.

"Well," said he, "as it's necessary that Mrs. Wick should lie down as soon as possible you might show us those third floor rooms."

Then he recovered his dignity and glanced at Madame more in sorrow than in anger. "Certainly, sare," she said severely. "Will you use the lift? For the lift there is no sharge."

"That," said the Senator, "is real liberal." In mo-

ments of emotion poppa often dropped into an Americanism. "If it's a serious offer I think we *will* use the lift."

At a nod from Madame, Francois went away to seek the man belonging to the lift, and after a time returned with him. The lady produced another key, with which the man belonging to the lift unlocked the door of the brass cage which guarded it.

"You must find strangers very dishonest, madam," said the Senator courteously as we stepped inside, "to render such a precaution necessary."

But before we arrived at the third floor we were convinced that it was unnecessary. It was not an elevator that the most burglarious would have cared to take away.

So many Americans surrounded the breakfast table next morning that we might almost have imagined ourselves in Chicago. A small, young priest with furtive brown eyes cowered at one of the side tables, and at another a broad-shouldered, unsmiling lady, dressed in black, with brows and a slight moustache to match, dispensed food to a sallow and shrinking object of preternaturally serious aspect who seemed to be her husband, and a little boy who kept an anxious eye on them both. They were French, too, but all the people who sat up and down the long middle table belonged to the United States of America. They were there in groups and in families representing different localities and different social positions—as momma said, you had only to look

at their shoulder seams; and each group or family received the advances of the next with the polite tolerance, head a little on one side, which characterises us when we don't know each other's business standing or church membership; but the tide of conversation which ebbed and flowed had a flavour which made the table a geographical unit. I say "flavour," because there was certainly something, but I am now inclined to think with Mr. Page that "accent" is rather too strong a word to describe it. At all events, the gratification of hearing it after his temporary exile in Great Britain almost brought tears to the Senator's eyes. There were only three vacant places, and, as we took them, making the national circle complete, a little smile wavered round the table. It was a proud, conscious smile; it indicated that though we might not be on terms of intimacy we recognised ourselves to be immensely and uniformly American, and considerably the biggest fraction of the travelling public. As poppa said, the prevailing feeling was also American. As he was tucking his napkin into his waistcoat, and ordering our various breakfasts, the gentleman who sat next to him listened—he could not help it—fidgetted, and finally, with some embarrassment, spoke.

"I don't know, sir," he said, "whether you're aware of it—I presume you're a stranger, like myself—but all they *allow* for what they call breakfast in this hotel is tea or coffee, rolls, and butter; everything else is charged extra."

Poppa was touched. As he said to me afterward, who but an American would have taken the trouble to tell a stranger a thing like that! Not an Englishman, certainly—he would see you bankrupt first! He disguised his own sophistication, and said he was very much obliged, and he almost apologised for not being able to take advantage of the information, and stick to coffee and rolls.

"But the fact is," he said in self-defence, "we may get back for lunch and we may not."

"That's all right," the gentleman replied with distinct relief. "I didn't mind the omelette or the sole, but when it came to fried chicken and strawberries I just had to speak out. You going to make a long stay in Paris?"

As they launched to conversation momma and I glanced at each other with mutual congratulation. It was at last obvious that the Senator was going to enjoy his European experiences; we had been a little doubtful about it. Left to ourselves, we discussed our breakfast and the waiters, the only French people we could see from where we sat, and expressed our annoyance, which was great, at being offered tooth-picks. I was so hungry that it was only when I asked for a third large roll that I noticed momma regarding me with mild disapproval.

"I fear," she said with a little sigh, "that you are thinking very little of what is past and gone, love."

"Momma," I replied, "don't spoil my breakfast."

When momma can throw an emotional chill over anything, I never knew her to refrain. "I *should* like that *garçon* to bring me some more bread," I continued.

Momma sighed even more deeply. "You may have part of mine," she replied, breaking it with a gesture that said such callousness she could not understand. Her manner for the next few minutes expressed distinctly that she, at least, meant to do her duty by Arthur.

Presently from the other side of poppa came the words, "*Not* Wick of Chicago!"

"I guess I can't deny it," said poppa.

"Senator Wick?"

Poppa lowered his voice. "If it's all the same to you," he said, "not for the present. Just plain Joshua P. Wick. I'm not what you call travelling incognito, do you see, but, so far as the U. S. Senate is concerned, I haven't got it with me."

"Well, sir, I won't mention it again. But all the same, if I may be allowed to say so, I am pleased to meet you, sir—very pleased. I suppose they wired you that Mike McConnell's got the Post Office."

Poppa held out his hand in an instant of speechless gratitude. "Sir," he said, "they did not. Put it there. I said no wires and no letters, and I've been sorry for it ever since. Momma," he continued, "daughter, allow me to present to you Mr.?—Mr. Malt, who has heard by cablegram that our friend Mr. McConnell is Postmaster-General of Chicago."

Momma was grateful, too, though she expressed it somewhat more distantly. Momma has a great deal of manner with strangers; it sometimes completely disguises her real feeling toward them. I was also grateful, though I merely bowed, and kicked the Senator under the table. Nobody would have guessed from our outward bearing the extent to which our political fortunes, as a family, were mixed up with Mike McConnell's. Mr. Malt immediately said that if there was anything else he could do for us he was at our service.

"Well," said poppa, "I suppose there's a good deal of intrinsic interest in this town—relics of Napoleon, the Bon Marché, and so on—and we've got to see it. I must say," he added, turning to momma, "I feel considerably more equal to it now."

"It will take you a good long week," said Mr. Malt earnestly, "to begin to have an idea of it. You might spend two whole days in the Louvre itself. Is your time limited?"

"I don't need to tell any American the market value of it," said poppa smiling.

"Then you can't do better than go straight to the Louvre. I'd be pleased to accompany you, only I've got to go round and see our Ambassador—I've got a little business with him. I daresay you know that one of our man-of-war ships is lying right down here in the Seine river. Well, the captain is giving a reception to-morrow in honour of the Russian Admiral who happens to be there, too. I've got ladies with me and I wrote for four

tickets. Did I get the four tickets—or two of them—or one? No, sir, I got a letter in the third person singular saying it wasn't a public entertainment! I wrote back to say I guessed it was an American entertainment, and he could expect me, all the same. He hadn't any sort of excuse—my name and business address were on my letter paper. Now I'm just going round to see what a United States Ambassador's for, in this connection."

Mr. Malt rose and the waiter withdrew his chair. "Thank you, *garçon*," said he. "I'm coming back again—do you understand? This is not my last meal," and the waiter bowed as if that were a statement which had to be acknowledged, but was of the least possible consequence to him personally. "Well, Mr. Wick," continued Mr. Malt, brushing the crumbs from his waistcoat, "I'll say good morning, and to your ladies also. I'm very pleased to have met you."

"Well," said momma, as he disappeared, "if every American in Paris has decided to go to that reception there won't be much room for the Russians."

"I suppose he's a voter and a tax-payer, and he's got his feelings," replied poppa. The Senator would defend a voter and a tax-payer against any imputation not actually criminal.

"I'm glad I'm not one of his lady-friends," momma continued. "I don't think I *could* make myself at home on that man-of-war under the circumstances. But I daresay he'll drag them there with him. He seems to be just that kind of a man."

"He's a very patriotic kind of a man," replied the Senator. "It's his patriotism, don't you see, that's giving him all this trouble. It's been outraged. Personally I consider Mr. Malt a very intelligent gentleman, and if he'd given me an opening as big as the eye of a needle I'm the camel that would have gone with him, Augusta."

This statement of the Senator's struck me as something to be acted upon. If there was to be a constant possibility of his going off with any chance American in regular communication with the United States, our European tour would be a good deal less interesting than I had been led to expect. While momma was getting ready for the Louvre, therefore, I stepped down to the office and wired our itinerary to his partner in Chicago. "Keep up daily communication by wire in detail," I telegraphed, "forward copies all important letters care Peters." Peters was the tourist agent who had undertaken to bless our comings and goings. I said nothing whatever to poppa, but I felt a glow of conscious triumph when I thought of Mr. Malt.

We stood and realised Paris on the pavement while the fiacre turned in from the road and drew up for us. I had every intention of being fascinated and so had momma. We had both heard often and often that good Americans when they die go to Paris, and that prepares one for a good deal in this life. We were so anxious to be pleased that we fastened with one accord upon the florist's shop under the hotel and said that it was uniquely charming, though we both knew places in

Broadway that it couldn't be compared with. We looked amiably at the passers-by, and did our best to detect in the manner of their faces that *esprit* that makes the dialogue of French novels so stimulating. What I usually thought I saw when they looked at us was a leisurely indifferentism ornamented with the suspicion of a sneer, and based upon a certain fundamental acquisitiveness and ability to make a valuation that acknowledged the desirability of our presence on business grounds, if not on personal ones. It seemed to be a preconcerted public intention to make as much noise in a given space as possible—we spoke of the cheerfulness of it, stopping our ears. The cracking of the drivers' whips alone made a *feu de joie* that never ceased, and listening to it we knew that we ought to feel happy and elated. The driver of our fiacre was fat and rubicund, he wore a green coat, brass buttons, and a shiny top hat, and looked as if he drank constantly. His jollity was perfunctory, I know, and covered a grasping nature, but it was very well imitated, like everything in Paris. As he whirled us, with a whip-report like a pistol-shot, into the train of traffic in the middle of the street, we felt that we were indeed in the city of appearances; and I put down in my mind, not having my note-book, that Paris lives up to its photographs.

"We mustn't forget our serious object, dear," said momma, as we rolled over the cobblestones—"our literary object. What shall we note this morning? The broad streets, the elegant shops—*do* look at that one!

Darling, is it absolutely necessary to go to the Louvre this morning? There are some things we really need."

Momma addressed the Senator. I mentioned to her once that her way of doing it was almost English in its demonstrativeness, and my other parent told me privately he wished I hadn't—it aggravated it so.

"Augusta," said poppa, firmly, "I understand your feeling. I take a human interest in those stores myself, which I do not expect this picture gallery, etc., to inspire in me. But there the Louvre *is*, you see, and it's got to be done. If we spent our whole time in this city in mere pleasure and amusement, you would be the first to reproach yourself, Augusta."

A few minutes later, when we had crossed the stone quadrangle and mounted the stairs, and stood with our catalogue in the Salle Lacaze, momma said that she wouldn't have missed it for anything. She sank ecstatic upon a bench, and gave to every individual picture upon the opposite wall the tribute of her intensest admiration. It was a pleasure to see her enjoying herself so much; and poppa and I vainly tried to keep up to her with the catalogue.

"Oh, why haven't we such things in Chicago!" she exclaimed, at which the Senator checked her mildly.

"It's a mere question of time," said he. "It isn't reasonable to expect Pre-Raphaelites in a new country. But give us three or four hundred years, and we'll produce old masters which, if you ladies will excuse the ex-

pression, will knock the spots out of the Middle Ages." Poppa is such an optimist about Chicago.

The Senator went on in a strain of criticism of the pictures perfectly moderate and kindly—nothing he wouldn't have said to the artists themselves—until momma interrupted him. "Don't you think we might be silent for a time, Alexander," she said.

Momma does call him Alexander sometimes. I didn't like to mention it before, but it can't be concealed for ever. She says it's because Joshua always costs her an effort, and every woman ought to have the right to name her own husband.

"Let us offer to all this genius," she continued, indicating it, "the tribute of sealing our lips."

The Senator will always oblige. "Mine are sealed, Augusta," he replied, and so we sat in silence for the next ten minutes. But I could see by his expression, in connection with the angle at which his hat was tipped, that he was comparing the productions before him with the future old masters of Chicago, and wishing it were possible to live long enough to back Chicago.

"How they do sink in!" said momma at last. "How they sink into the soul!"

"They do," replied the Senator. "I don't deny it. But I see by the catalogue, counting Salles and Salons and all, there's seventeen rooms full of them. If they're all to sink in, for my part I'll have to enlarge the premises. And we've been here three-quarters of an hour already, and life is short, Augusta."

So we moved on where the imperishable faces of Greuze and Velasquez and Rembrandt smiled and frowned and wondered at us. As poppa said, it was easy to see that these people had ideas, and were simply longing to express them. "You feel sorry for them," he said, "just as you feel sorry for an intelligent terrier. But these poor things can't even wag their tails! Just let me know when you've had enough, Augusta."

Momma declared, with an accent of reproach, that she could never have enough. I noticed, however, that we did not stay in the second room as long as in the first one, and that our progress was steadily accelerating. Presently the Senator asked us to sit down for a few minutes while he should leave us.

"There's a picture here Bramley said I was to see without fail," he explained. "It's called 'Mona Lisa,' and it's by an artist by the name of Leonardo da Vinci. Bramley said it was a very fine painting, but I don't remember just now whether he said it was what you might call a picture for the family or not. I'll just go and ascertain," said the Senator. "Judging from some of the specimens here, oil paintings in the Middle Ages weren't intended to be chromo-lithographed."

In his absence momma and I discussed French cookery as far as we had experienced it, in detail, with prodigious yawns for which we did not even apologise. Poppa was gone a remarkably short time and came back radiant. "I've found Mona," he exclaimed, "and—she's all right. Bramley said it was the most remark-

able portrait of a woman in the world—looking at it, Bramley said, you become insensible to everything—forget all about your past life and future hopes—and I guess he's about right. Come and see it."

Momma arose without enthusiasm, and I thought I detected adverse criticism in advance in her expression.

"Here she is," said the Senator presently. "Now look at that! Did you ever see anything more intellectual and cynical, and contemptuous and sweet, all in one! Lookin' at you as much as to say, 'Who are you, anyhow, from way back in the State of Illinois—commercial traveller? And what do you pretend to know?'"

Momma regarded the portrait for a moment in calm disapprobation. "I daresay she was very clever," she said at length, "but if you wish to know my opinion I *don't think much of her.* And before taking us to see another female portrait, Mr. Wick, I should be obliged if you would take the precaution of finding out *who she was.*"

After which we drove quietly home.

CHAPTER VI.

Poppa decided that we had better go to Versailles by Cook's four-in-hand. There were other ways of going, but he thought we might as well take the most distinguished. He was careful to explain that the mere grandeur of this method of transportation had no weight with him; he was compelled to submit to the ostentation of it for another purpose which he had in view.

"I am not a person," said poppa, "nor is any member of my family, to thrust myself into aristocratic circles in foreign lands; but when an opportunity like this occurs for observing them without prejudice, so to speak, I believe in taking it."

We went to the starting place early, so as to get good seats, for, as momma said, the whole of the Parisian *élite* with the President thrown in wouldn't induce her to ride with her back to the horses. In that position she would be incapable of observation.

The coaches were not there when we arrived, and presently the Senator discovered why. He told us with a slightly depressed air that they had gone round to the hotels.

"Daughter," he said to me, "J. P. Wicks does hate

to make a fool of himself, and this morning he's done it twice over. The best seats will go to the people who had the sense to stay at their hotels, and the fact that the coaches go round shows that they run for tourist traffic only. There won't be a Paris aristocrat among them," continued poppa gloomily, " nary an aristocrat."

When they came up we saw that there wasn't. The coaches were full of tourist traffic. It was mounted on the box seats very high up, where it looked conspicuously happy, and sounded a little hysterical; and it was packed, tight and warm and anticipant into every available seat. From its point of vantage, secured by waiting at the hotel for it, the tourist traffic looked down upon the Wick family on the pavement, in irritating compassion. As momma said, if we hadn't taken our tickets it was enough to have sent us to the Bon Marché.

A man in a black frock coat and white shirt cuffs came bareheaded from the office and pointed us out to the interpreter, who wore brass buttons. The interpreter appeared to mention it to the guide, who wiped his perspiring brows under a soft brown felt hat. A fiacre crawled round the corner and paused to look on, and the Senator said, " Now which of you three gentlemen is responsible for my ride to Versailles? "

The interpreter looked at him with a hostile expression, the guide made a gesture of despair at the volume of tourist traffic, and the man with the shirt cuffs said, " You 'ave took your plazes on ze previous day? "

"I took them from you ten minutes ago," poppa replied. "What a memory you've got!"

"Zen zare is nothings guaranteed. But we will send special carriage, and be'ind you can follow up," and he indicated the fiacre which had now drawn into line.

"I don't think so," said poppa, "when I buy four-in-hand tickets I don't take one-in-hand accommodation."

"You will not go in ze private carriage?"

"I will not."

"*Mais*—it is much ze preferable."

"I don't know why I should contradict you," said poppa, but at that moment the difficulty was solved by the Misses Bingham.

"Guide!" cried one of the Misses Bingham, beckoning with her fan, "*Nous voulons à descendre!*"

"You want get out?"

"*Oui!*" replied the Misses Bingham with simultaneous dignity, and, as the guide merely wiped his forehead again, poppa stepped forward. "Can I assist you?" he said, and the Misses Bingham allowed themselves to be assisted. They were small ladies, dressed in black pongee silk, with sloping shoulders, and they each carried a black fan and a brocaded bag for odds and ends. They were not plain-looking, and yet it was readily seen why nobody had ever married them; they had that look of the predestined single state that you sometimes see even among the very well preserved. One of them had

an eye-glass, but it was easy to note even when she was not wearing it that she was a person of independent income, of family, and of New York.

"We are quite willing," said the Misses Bingham, "to exchange our seats in the coach for yours in the special carriage, if that arrangement suits you."

"*Bon!*" interposed the guide, "and opposite there is one other place if that fat gentleman will squeeze himself a little—eh?"

"Come along!" said the fat gentleman equably.

"But I couldn't think of depriving you ladies."

"Sir," said one Miss Bingham, "it is no deprivation."

"We should prefer it," added the other Miss Bingham. They spoke with decision; one saw that they had not reached middle age without knowing their own minds all the way.

"To tell the truth," added the Miss Bingham without the eye-glass in a low voice, "we don't think we can stand it."

"I don't precisely take you, madam," said the Senator politely.

"I'm an American," she continued.

Poppa bowed. "I should have known you for a daughter of the Stars and Stripes anywhere," he said in his most complimentary tone.

Miss Bingham looked disconcerted for an instant and went on. "My great grandfather was A. D. C. to

General Washington. I've got that much reason to be loyal."

"There couldn't have been many such officers," the Senator agreed.

"But when I go abroad I don't want the whole of the United States to come with me."

"It takes the gilt off getting back for you?" suggested poppa a little stiffly.

Miss Bingham failed to take the hint. "We find Europe infested with Americans," she continued. "It disturbs one's impressions so. And the travelling American invariably belongs to the very *least* desirable class."

"Now I shouldn't have thought so," said the Senator, with intentional humour. But it was lost upon Miss Bingham.

"Well, if you like them," said the other one, "you'd better go in the coach."

The Senator lifted his hat. "Madam," he said, "I thank you for giving to me and mine the privilege of visiting a very questionable scene of the past in the very best society of the present."

And as the guide was perspiring more and more impatiently, we got in.

For some moments the Senator sat in silence, reflecting upon this sentiment, with an occasionally heaving breast. Circumstances forbade his talking about it, but he cast an eye full of criticism upon the fiacre rolling along far in the rear, and remarked, with a fervor most unusual, that he hoped they liked our dust. We cer-

tainly made a great deal of it. Momma and I, looking at our fellow travellers, at once decided that the Misses Bingham had been a little hasty. The fat gentleman, who wore a straw hat very far back, and meant to enjoy himself, was certainly our fellow-citizen. So was his wife, and brother-in-law. So were a bride and bridegroom on the box seat—nothing less than the best of everything for an American honeymoon—and so was a solitary man with a short cut bristly beard, a slouch hat, a pink cotton shirt, and a celluloid collar. But there was an indescribable something about all the rest that plainly showed they had never voted for a president or celebrated a Fourth of July. I was still revolving it in my mind when the fat gentleman, who had been thinking of the same thing, said to his neighbour on the other side, a person of serious appearance in a black silk hat, apropos of the line he had crossed by, "I may be wrong, but I shouldn't have put you down to be an American."

"Oh, I guess I am," replied the serious man, "but not the United States kind."

"British North," suggested the fat gentleman, with a smile that acknowledged Her Majesty. "First cousin once removed," and momma and I looked at one another intelligently. We had nothing against Canadians, except that they generally talk as if they had the whole of the St. Lawrence river and Niagara Falls in a perpetual lease from Providence—and we had never seen so many of them together before. The coach was three-

quarters full of these foreigners, if the Misses Bingham had only known; but as poppa afterwards said, they were probably not foreign enough. It may have been imagination, but I immediately thought I saw a certain meekness, a habit of deference—I wanted to incite them all to treat the Guelphs as we did. Just then we stopped before the church of St. Augustin, and the guide came swinging along the outside of the coach hoarsely emitting facts. Everybody listened intently, and I noticed upon the Canadian countenances the same determination to be instructed that we always show ourselves. We all meant to get the maximum amount of information for the price, and I don't think any of us have forgotten that the site of St. Augustin is three-cornered and its dome resembles a tiara to this day. For a moment I was sorry for the Misses Bingham, who were absorbing nothing but dust; but, as momma said, they looked very well informed.

It must be admitted that we were a little shy with the guide—we let him bully us. As poppa said, he was certainly well up in his subject, but that was no reason why he should have treated us as if we had all come from St. Paul or Kansas City. There was a condescension about him that was not explained by the state of his linen, and a familiarity that I had always supposed confined exclusively to the British aristocracy among themselves. He had a red face and a blue eye, with which he looked down on us with scarcely concealed contempt, and he was marvellously agile, distributing

his information as open street-car conductors collect fares.

"They seem extremely careful of their herbage in this town," remarked the serious man, and we noticed that it was so. Precautions were taken in wire that would have dissuaded a grasshopper from venturing on it. It grew very neatly inside, doubtless with a certain *chic*, but it had a look of being put on for the occasion that was essentially Parisian. Also the trees grew up out of iron plates, which was uncomfortable, though, no doubt, highly finished, and the flowers had a *cachet* about them which made one think of French bonnets. As we rolled into the Bois it became evident that the guide had something special to communicate. He raised his voice and coughed, in a manner which commanded instant attention.

"Ladies—and genelmen," he said—he always added the gentleman as if they were an after-thought—"you are mos' fortunate, mos' locky. *Tout Paris*—all the folks—are still driving their 'orse an' carriage 'ere. One week more—the style will be all gone—what you say—vamoosed? Every mother's son! An' Cook's excursion party won't see nothin' but ole cabs goin' along!"

"Can't we get away from them?" asked the serious person. It was humorously intended—certainly a liberty, and the guide was down on it in an instant.

"Get away from them? Not if they know you're here!"

At which the serious man looked still more serious, and sympathy for him sprang up in every heart.

We passed Longchamps at a steady trot, and the guide's statement that the races there were always held on Sunday was received with a silence that evidently disappointed him. It was plain that he had a withering rejoinder ready for sabbatarians, and he waited anxiously, balanced on one foot, for an expression of shocked opinion. It was after we had passed Mont Valerien, frowning on the horizon, that the man in the pink cotton shirt began to grow restive under so much instruction. He told the serious person that his name was Hinkson of Iowa, and the serious person was induced to reply that his was Pabbley of Simcoe, Ontario. It was insubordination—the guide was talking about the shelling from Mont Valerien at the time, with the most patriotic dislocations in his grammar.

"You understan', you see?" he concluded. "Now those two genelmen, they *don'* understan', and they *don'* see. An' when they get back to the United States they won' be able to tell their wives an' sweethearts anythin' about Mont Valerien! All right, genelmen—please yourselves. *Mais* you please remember I am just like William Shekspeare—I give no *repétition!*"

It was then that the serious man demonstrated that Britons, even the North American kind, never, never would be slaves. Placing his black silk hat carefully a little further back on his head, he leaned forward.

"Now look here, mister," he said, "you're as per-

sonal as a Yankee newspaper. So far as I know, you're not the friend of my childhood, nor the companion of my later years, except for this trip only, and I'd just as soon you realised it. As far as I know, you're paid to point out objects of historical interest. Don't you trouble to entertain us any further than that. We'll excuse you!"

"Ladies—an' genelmen," continued the guide calmly, "in a lil' short while we shall be approached to the town of St. Cloud. At that town of St. Cloud will be one genelman will take the excellen' group—fotograff. To appear in that fotograff, you will please all keep together with me. Afterwards, you will look at the fountains, at the magnificent panorama de Paris, and we go on to Versailles. On the return journey, if you like that fotograff you can buy, if you don't like, you don' buy. An' if you got no wife an' no sweetheart all the same you keep your temper!"

But Mr. Pabbley had settled his hat in its normal position and did not intend to clear his brow for action again. All might have gone well, had it not been for the patriotic sensitiveness of Mr. Hinkson of Iowa.

"I think I heard you pass a remark about American newspapers, sir," said Mr Hinkson of Iowa. "Think you've got any better in Canada?"

Mr. Pabbley smiled. There may have been some fancied superiority in the smile.

"I guess they suit us better," he said.

"Got any circulation figures about you?"

"Not being an advertising agent, I don't carry them."

"I see!" Mr. Hinkson's manner of saying he saw clearly implied that there might have been other reasons why Mr. Pabbley declined to produce those figures. We were all listening now, and the guide had subsided upon the box seat. The Senator's face wore the judicial expression it always assumes when he has a difficulty in keeping himself out of the conversation. It became easier than ever to separate the Republican and the British elements on that coach.

"Well," said Mr. Hinkson, "don't you folks get pretty tired of paying Victoria taxes sometimes?"

The British contingent seemed to find this amusing. The Americans looked as if it were no laughing matter.

"I don't believe Her Majesty is much the richer for all she gets out of us," said Mr. Pabbley.

"Oh, I guess you send over a pretty good lump per annum, don't you?"

"Not a red cent, sir," said Mr. Pabbley decisively. "We run our own show."

"What about that aristocrat that rules the country up at Ottawa?"

"Oh, *he* hasn't got any say! We get him out and pay him a salary to save ourselves the trouble of electing a president. A presidential election's bad for business, bad for politics, bad for morals."

"You seem to know. Doesn't it ever make you tired to hear yourselves called subjects? Don't you ever want

to be free and equal, like us? Trot out the truth now—the George Washington article!"

"Mister," said Mr. Pabbley, "I flatter myself that Canadians are a good deal like United States folks already, and I don't mind congratulating both our nations on the resemblance. But I'm bound to add that, while I would wish to imitate the American people in many ways still further, I wouldn't be like you personally, no, not under any circumstances nor in any respect."

At this moment it was necessary to dismount, and, as poppa and I both immediately became engaged in reconciling momma to the necessity of walking to the top of the plateau, I lost the rest of the conversation. Momma, when it was necessary to walk anywhere, always became pathetic and offered to stay behind alone. She declared on this occasion that she would be perfectly happy in the coach with the dear horses, and poppa had to resort to extreme measures. "Please yourself, Augusta," he said. "Your lightest whim is law to me, and you know it. But I'm going to hate standing up in that photograph all alone with my only child, like any widower."

"Alexander!" exclaimed momma at once. "What a dreadful idea! I think I might be able to manage it."

The photographer was there with his camera. The guide marshalled us up to him, falling back now and then to bark at the heels of the lagging ones, and, with the assistance of a bench and an acacia, we were rapidly arranged, the short ones standing up, the tall ones sitting down, everyone assuming his most pleasing ex-

pression, and the Misses Bingham standing alone, apart, on the brink, looking on under an umbrella that seemed to protect them from intimate association with the democracy in any form. We saw the guide approach them in gingerly inquiry, but, before simultaneous waves of their two black fans, he retired in disorder. The bride had slipped her hand upon her husband's shoulder, just to mark his identity; the fat gentleman had removed his hat and hurriedly put it on again, and the photographer had gone under his curtain for the third time, when Mr. Hinkson of Iowa, who sat in a conspicuous cross-legged position in the foreground, drew from his pocket a handkerchief and spread it carefully out over one knee. It was not an ordinary handkerchief, it was a pocket edition of the Stars and Stripes, all red, and blue, and white, and it attracted the instant attention of every eye. One of the eyes was Mr. Pabbley's, who appeared to clear the group at a bound in consequence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Pabbley with vehemence, "does anyone happen to have a Union Jack about him or her?"

They felt in their pockets, but they hadn't.

"Then," said Mr. Pabbley, who was evidently aroused, "unless the gentleman from Iowa will withdraw his handkerchief, I refuse to sit."

"I guess we aren't any of us annexationists," said a middle-aged woman from Toronto in a duster, and proceeded to follow Mr. Pabbley.

The rest of the Canadians looked at each other undecidedly for a moment and then slowly filed after the middle-aged woman. There remained the mere wreck of a group clustering round the national emblem on the leg of Mr. Hinkson. The guide was expostulating himself speechless, the photographer was in convulsions, the Senator saw it was time to interfere. Leaning over, he gently tapped the patriot from Iowa on the shoulder.

"Aren't you satisfied with the sixty million fellow-citizens you've got already," said poppa, "that you want to grab nine half-starved Canucks with a hand camera?"

"They're in the majority here," said Mr. Hinkson fiercely, "and I dare any one of 'em to touch that flag. Go along over there and join 'em if you like—they're goin' to be done by themselves—to send to Queen Victoria!"

But that was further than anybody would go, even in defence of cosmopolitanism. The Republic rallied round Mr. Hinkson's leg, while the Dominion with much dignity supported Mr. Pabbley. As momma said, human nature is perfectly extraordinary.

For the rest of the journey to Versailles there was hardly any international conversation. Mr. Hinkson tied his handkerchief round his neck, and the Canadians tried to look as if they had no objection. We passed through the villages of Montretout and Buze. I know we did because momma took down the names, but I fancy they couldn't have differed much from the general landscape, for I don't remember a thing about

them. The Misses Bingham came and sat next us at luncheon, which flattered both momma and me immensely, though the Senator didn't seem able to see where the distinction came in, and during this meal they pointed out the fact that Mr. Hinkson was drinking lemonade with his roast mutton, and asked us how we *could* travel with such a combination. I remember poppa said that it was a combination that Mr. Hinkson and Mr. Hinkson only had to deal with, but momma and I felt the obloquy of it a good deal, though when we came to think of it we were no more responsible for Mr. Hinkson than the Misses Bingham were. After that, walking rapidly behind the guide, we covered centuries of French history, illustrated by chairs and tables and fire-irons and chandeliers and four-post beds. Momma told me afterwards that she was rather sorry she had taken me with the guide through Madame du Barry's fascinating Petit Trianon, the things he didn't say sounded so improper, but when I assured her that it was only contemporary scandal that had any effect on our morals, she said she supposed that was so, and somehow one never did expect people who wore curled wigs and knee-breeches to behave quite prettily. The rooms were dotted with groups of people who had come in fiacres or by tramway, which made it difficult for the guide to impart his information only to those who had paid for it. He generally surmounted this by saying, "Ladies and genelmen, I want you to stick closer than brothers. When you hear me a-talkin' don' you go turnin' over

your Baedekers and lookin' out of the window. If I didn't know a great big sight more about Versailles than Baedeker does I wouldn't be here makin' a clown of myself; an' I'll show you the view out of the window all in good time. You see that lady an' two genelmen over there? *They're* listenin' all right enough because they don't belong to this party an' they want to get a little information cheap price. All right—I let 'em have it!" At which the lady and two gentlemen usually melted away looking annoyed.

We were fascinated with the coaches of state and much impressed with the cost of them. As momma said, it took so very *little* imagination to conjure up a Royal Philip inside bowing to the populace.

"What a pity we couldn't have had them over!" said poppa indiscreetly.

"Where you mean?" demanded the guide, "over to America? I know—for that ole Chicago show! You are the five hundred American who has said that to me this summer! Number five hundred! Nossir, we don't lend those carriage. We don't even drive them ourself."

"No more kings and queens nowadays," remarked Mr. Hinkson, "this century's got no use for them."

I think the guide was a Monarchist. "Nossir," he said, "you don't see no more kings an' queens of France, but you do see a good many people travellin' that's nothin' like so good for trade."

At which Mr. Pabbley's eye sought that of the

guide, and expressed its appreciation in a marked and joyous wink.

In the Palace, especially in the picture rooms, there were generally benches along the walls. When momma observed this she arranged that she should go on ahead and sit down and get the impression, while poppa and I caught up from time to time with the guide and the information. The guide was quite agreeable about it, when it was explained to him.

He was either a very thoughtless or a very insincere person, however. Stopping before the portrait of an officer in uniform, he drew us all together. The Canadians, headed by Mr. Pabbley, were well to the fore, and it was to them in particular that he appeared to address himself when he said, "Take a good look at this picture, ladies and genelmen. There is a man wat lives in your 'istory an', if I may say, in your 'art—as he does in ours. There's a man, ladies and genelmen, that helped you on to liberty. Take a good look at 'im, you'll be glad to remember it afterward."

And it was General Lafayette!

CHAPTER VII.

It was after dinner and we were sitting in the little courtyard of the hotel in the dark without our hats—that is, momma and I; the Senator was seldom altogether without his hat. I think he would have felt it to be a little indecent. The courtyard was paved, and there were flowers on the stand in the middle of it, natural palms and artificial begonias mixed with the most annoying cleverness, and little tables for coffee cups or glasses were scattered about. Outside beyond the hotel vestibule one could see and hear Paris rolling by in the gaslight. It was the only place in the hotel that did not smell of furniture, so we frequented it. So did Mr. Malt and Mrs. Malt, and Emmeline Malt, and Miss Callis. That was chiefly how we made the acquaintance of the Malt party. You can't very well sit out in the dark in a foreign capital with a family from your own State and not get to know them. Besides poppa never could overcome his feeling of indebtedness to Mr. Malt. They were taking Emmeline abroad for her health. She was the popular thirteen-year-old only child of American families, and she certainly was thin. I remember being pleased, sometimes, considering her in her typical

capacity, that I once had a little brother, though he died before I was born.

The two gentlemen were smoking; we could see nothing but the ends of their cigars glowing in their immediate vicinity. Momma was saying that the situation was very romantic, and Mr. Malt had assured her that it was nothing to what we would experience in Italy. "That's where you *get* romance," said Mr. Malt, and his cigar end dropped like a falling star as he removed the ash. "Italy's been romantic ever since B. C. All through the time the rest of the world was inventing Magna Chartas and Doomsday Books, and Parliaments, and printing presses, and steam engines, Italy's gone right on turning out romance. Result is, a better quality of that article to be had in Italy to-day than anywhere else. Further result, twenty million pounds spent there annually by tourists from all parts of the civilised world. Romance, like anything else, can be made to pay."

"Are we likely to find the beds——" began Mrs. Malt plaintively.

"Oh dear yes, Mrs. Malt!" interrupted momma, who thought everything entomological extremely indelicate. "Perfectly. You have only to go to the hotels the guide-books recommend, and everything will be quite *propre*."

"Well," said Emmeline, "they may be *propre* in Italy, but they're not *propre* in Paris. We had to speak to the housemaid yesterday morning, didn't

we, mother? Don't you remember the back of my neck?"

"We all suffered!" declared Mrs. Malt.

"And I *showed* one to her, mother, and all she would say was, '*Jamais ici, mademoiselle, ici, jamais!*' And there it *was* you know."

"Emmeline," said her father, "isn't it about time for you to want to go to bed?"

"Not by about three hours. I'm going to get up a little music first. Do you play, Mis' Wick?"

Momma said she didn't, and Miss Malt disappeared in search of other performers. "Don't you go asking strangers to play, Emmeline," her mother called after her. "They'll think it forward of you."

"When Emmeline leaves us," said her father, "I always have a kind of abandoned feeling, like a top that's got to the end of its spin."

There was silence for a moment, and then the Senator said he thought he could understand that.

"Well," continued Mr. Malt, "you've had three whole days now. I presume you're beginning to know your way around."

"I think we may say we've made pretty good use of our time," responded the Senator. "This morning we had a look in at the Luxembourg picture gallery, and the Madeleine, and Napoleon's Tomb, and the site of the Bastile. This afternoon we took a run down to Notre Dame Cathedral. That's a very fine building, sir."

"You saw the Morgue, of course, when you were in that direction," remarked Mr. Malt.

"Why no," poppa confessed, "we haven't taken much of liking for live Frenchmen, up to the present, and I don't suppose dead ones would be any more attractive."

"Oh, there's nothing unpleasant," said Mrs. Malt, "nothing that you can *notice*."

"Nothing at all," said Mr. Malt. "They refrigerate them, you know. We send our beef to England by the same process——"

"There are people," the Senator interrupted, "who never can see anything amusing in a corpse."

"They don't let you in as a matter of course," Mr. Malt went on. "You have to pretend that you're looking for a relation."

"We had to mention Uncle Sammy," said Mrs. Malt.

"An uncle of Mis' Malt's who went to California in '49 and was never heard of afterward," Mr. Malt explained. "First use he's ever been to his family. Well, there they were, seven of 'em, lying there looking at you yesterday. All in good condition. I was told they have a place downstairs for the older ones."

"Alexander," said momma faintly, "I think I *should* like a little brandy in my coffee. Were there—were there any ladies among them, Mr. Malt?"

"Three," Mr. Malt responded briskly, "and one of them had her hair——"

"Then *please* don't tell us about them," momma exclaimed, and the silence that ensued was one of slight indignation on the part of the Malt family.

"You been seeing the town at all, evenings?" Mr. Malt inquired of the Senator.

"I can't say I have. We've been seeing so much of it in the daytime, we haven't felt able to enjoy anything at night except our beds," poppa returned with his accustomed candour.

"Just so. All the same there's a good deal going on in Paris after supper."

"So I've always been told," said the Senator, lighting another cigar.

"They've got what you might call characteristic shows here. You see a lot of life."

"Can you take your ladies?" asked the Senator.

"Well of course you *can*, but I don't believe they would find it interesting."

"Too much life," said the Senator. "I guess that settles it for me too. I daresay I'm lacking in originality and enterprise, but I generally ask myself about an entertainment, 'Are Mrs. and Miss Wick likely to enjoy it?' If so, well and good. If not, I don't as a rule take it in."

"He's a great comfort that way," remarked momma to Mrs. Malt.

"Oh, I don't fre*quent* them myself," said Mr. Malt defensively.

"Talking of improprieties," remarked Miss Callis, "have you seen the New Salon?"

There was something very unexpected about Miss Callis; momma complained of it. Her remarks were never polished by reflection. She called herself a child of nature, but she really resided in Brooklyn.

The Senator said we had not.

"Then don't you go, Mr. Wick. There's a picture there——"

"We never look at such pictures, Miss Callis," momma interrupted.

"It's *so* French," said Miss Callis.

Momma drew her shawl round her preparatory to withdrawing, but it was too late.

"Too French for words," continued Miss Callis. "The poet Lamartine, with a note-book and pencil in his hand, seated in a triumphal chariot, drawn through the clouds by beautiful Muses."

"Oh," said momma, in a relieved voice, "there's nothing so dreadfully French about that."

"You should have seen it," said Miss Callis. "It was simply immoral. Lamartine was in a frock coat!"

"There could have been nothing objectionable in that," momma repeated. "I suppose the Muses——"

"The Muses were not in frock coats. They were dressed in their traditions," replied Miss Callis, "but they couldn't save the situation, poor dears."

Momma looked as if she wished she had the courage to ask Miss Callis to explain.

"In picture galleries," remarked poppa, "we've seen only the Luxembourg and the Louvre. The Louvre, I acknowledge, is worthy of a second visit. But I don't believe we'll have time to get round again."

"We've got to get a hustle on ourselves in a day or two," said Mr. Malt, as we separated for the night. "There's all Italy and Switzerland waiting for us, and they're bound to be done, because we've got circular tickets. But there's something about this town that I hate to leave."

"He doesn't know whether it's the Arc de Triomphe on the Bois de Boulogne or the Opera Comique, or what," said Mrs. Malt in affectionate criticism. "But we've been here a week over our time now, and he doesn't seem able to tear himself away."

"I'll tell you what it is," exclaimed Mr. Malt, producing a newspaper, "it's this little old *New York Herald.* There's no use comparing it with any American newspaper, and it wouldn't be fair to do so; but I wonder these French rags, in a foreign tongue, aren't ashamed to be published in the same capital with it. It doesn't take above a quarter of an hour to read in the mornings, but it's a quarter of an hour of solid comfort that you don't expect somehow abroad. If the *New York Herald* were only published in Rome I wouldn't mind going there."

"There's something," said poppa, thoughtfully, as we ascended to the third floor, "in what Malt says."

Next day we spent an hour buying trunks for the

accommodation of the unattainable elsewhere. Then poppa reminded us that we had an important satisfaction yet to experience. "Business before pleasure," he said, "certainly. But we've been improving our minds pretty hard for the last few days, and I feel the need of a little relaxation. D. V. and W. P., I propose this afternoon to make the ascent of the Eiffel Tower. Are you on?"

"I will accompany you, Alexander, if it is safe," said momma, "and, if it is unsafe, I couldn't possibly let you go without me."

Momma is naturally a person of some timidity, but when the Senator proposes to incur any danger, she always suggests that he shall do it over her dead body.

I forget where we were at the time, but I know that we had only to walk through the perpetual motion of Paris, across a bridge, and down a few steps on the other side, to find the little steamer that took us by the river to the Tower. We might have gone by omnibus or by fiacre, but if we had we should never have known what a street the Seine is, sliding through Paris, brown in the open sun, dark under the shadowing arches of the bridges, full of hastening comers and goers from landing-place to landing-place, up and down. It gave us quite a new familiarity with the river, which had been before only a part of the landscape, and one of the things that made Paris imposing. We saw that it was a highway of traffic, and that the little, brisk, business-like steamers were full of people, who went about in them

because it was the cheapest and most convenient way, and not at all for the pleasure of a trip by water. We noticed, too, a difference in these river-going people. Some of them carried baskets, and some of them read the *Petit Journal*, and they all comfortably submitted to the good-natured bullying of the mariner in charge. There were elderly women in black, with a button or two off their tight bodices, and children with patched shoes carrying an assortment of vegetables, and middle-aged men in slouch hats, smoking tobacco that would have been forbidden by public statute anywhere else. They all treated us with a respect and consideration which we had not observed in the Avenue de l'Opera, and I noticed the Senator visibly expanding in it. There was also a man and a little boy, and a dog, all lunching out of the same basket. Afterward, on being requested to do so, the dog performed tricks—French ones—to the enjoyment and satisfaction of all three. There was a great deal of politeness and good feeling, and if they were not Capi and Remi and Vitalis in "*Sans Famille*," it was merely because their circumstances were different.

As we stood looking at the Eiffel Tower, poppa said he thought if he were in my place he wouldn't describe it. "It's old news," he said, "and there's nothing the general public dislike so much as that. Every hotel-porter in Chicago knows that it's three hundred metres high, and that you can see through it all the way up. There it is, and I feel as if I'd passed my boyhood in its

shadow. That way I must say it's a disappointment. I was expecting it to be more unexpected, if you understand."

Momma and I quite agreed. It had the familiarity of a demonstration of Euclid, and to the non-engineering mind was about as interesting. The Senator felt so well acquainted with it that he hesitated about buying a descriptive pamphlet. "They want to sell a stranger too much information in this country," he said. "The meanest American intelligence is equal to stepping into an elevator and stepping out again." But he bought one nevertheless, and was particularly pleased with it, not only because it was the cheapest thing in Paris at five cents, but because, as he said himself, it contained an amount of enthusiasm not usually available at any price.

The Senator thought, as we entered the elevator at the first story, that the accommodation compared very well indeed with anything in his experience. He had only one criticism—there was no smoking-room. We had a slight difficulty with momma at the second story —she did not wish to change her elevator. Inside she said she felt perfectly secure, but the tower itself she knew *must* waggle at that height when once you stepped out. In the end, however, we persuaded her not to go down before she had made the ascent, and she rose to the top with her eyes shut. When we finally got out, however, the sight of numbers of young ladies selling Eiffel Tower mementoes steadied her nerves. She

agreed with poppa that business premises would never let on anything but the most stable basis.

"It's exactly as Bramley said," remarked the Senator. "You're up so high that the scenery, so far as Paris is concerned, becomes perfectly ridiculous. It might as well be a map."

"*Don't* look over, Alexander," said momma. "It will fill you with a wild desire to throw yourself down. It is said *always* to have that effect."

"'The past ends in this plain at your feet,'" quoted poppa critically from the guide-book, "'the future will there be fulfilled.' I suppose they did feel a bit uppish when they'd got as high as this—but you'd think France was about the only republic at present doing business, wouldn't you?"

I pointed out the Pantheon down below and St. Etienne du Mont, and poppa was immediately filled with a poignant regret that we had spent so much time seeing public buildings on foot. "Whereas," said he, "from our present point of view we could have done them all in ten minutes. As it is, we shall be in a position to say we've seen everything there is to be seen in Paris. Bramley won't be able to tell us it's a pity we've missed anything. However," he continued, "we must be conscientious about it. I've no desire to play it low down on Bramley. Let us walk round and pick out the places of interest he's most likely to expect to catch us on, and look at them separately. I should hate to think I wasn't telling the truth about a thing like that."

"We walked round and specifically observed the "Ecole des Beaux Arts," the "Palais d'Industrie," "Liberty Enlightening the World," and other objects, poppa carefully noting against each of them "seen from Eiffel Tower." As we made our way to the river side we noticed four other people, two ladies and two gentlemen, looking at the military balloon hanging over Meudon. They all had their backs to us, and there was to me something dissimilarly familiar about three of those backs. While I was trying to analyse it one of the gentlemen turned, and caught sight of poppa. In another instant the highest elevation yet made by engineering skill was the scene of three impetuous American handclasps, and four impulsive American voices were saying, "Why how *do* you do!" The gentleman was Mr. Richard Dod of Chicago, known to our family without interruption since he wore long clothes. Mr. Dod had come into his patrimony and simultaneously disappeared in the direction of Europe six months before, since when we had only heard vaguely that he had lost most of it, but was inalterably cheerful; and there was nobody, apparently, he expected so little or desired so much to see in Paris as the Senator, momma and me. Poppa called him "Dick, my boy," momma called him "my dear Dicky," I called him plain "Dick," and when this had been going on for, possibly, five minutes, the older and larger of the two ladies of the party swung round with a majesty I at once associated with my earlier London experiences, and regarded us through her *pince nez.*

There was no mistaking her disapproval. I had seen it before. We were Americans and she was Mrs. Portheris of Half Moon-street, Piccadilly. I saw that she recognised me and was trying to make up her mind whether, in view of the complication of Mr. Dod, to bow or not. But the woman who hesitates is lost, even though she be a British matron of massive prejudices and a figure to match. In Mrs. Portheris's instant of vacillation, I stepped forward with such enthusiasm that she was compelled to take down her *pince nez* and hold out a superior hand. I took it warmly, and turned to my parents with a joy which was not in the least affected. "Momma," I exclaimed, "try to think of the very last person who would naturally cross your mind—our relation, Mrs. Portheris. Poppa, allow me to introduce you to your aunt—Mrs. Portheris. Your far distant nephew from Chicago, Mr. Joshua Peter Wick."

It was a moment to be remembered—we all said so afterwards. Everything hung upon Mrs. Portheris's attitude. But it was immediately evident that Mrs. Portheris considered parents of any kind excusable, even commendable! Her manner said as much—it also implied, however, that she could not possibly be held responsible for transatlantic connections by a former marriage. Momma was nervous, but collected. She bowed a distant Wastgaggle bow, an heirloom in the family, which gave Mrs. Portheris to understand that if any cordiality was to characterise the occasion, it

would have to emanate from her. Besides, Mrs. Portheris was poppa's relation, and would naturally have to be guarded against. Poppa, on the other hand, was cordiality itself—he always is.

"Why, is that so?" said poppa, looking earnestly at Mrs. Portheris and firmly retaining her hand. "Is this my very own Aunt Caroline?"

"At one time," responded Mrs. Portheris with a difficult smile, "and, I fear, by marriage only."

"Ah, to be sure, to be sure! Poor Uncle Jimmy gave place to another. But we won't say anything more about that. Especially as you've been equally unfortunate with your second," said poppa sympathetically. "Well, I'm sure I'm pleased to meet you —glad to shake you by the hand." He gave that member one more pressure as he spoke and relinquished it.

"It is extremely unlooked for," replied his Aunt Caroline, and looked at Mr. Dod, who quailed, as if he were in some way responsible for it. "I confess I am not in the habit of meeting my connections promiscuously abroad." When we came to analyse the impropriety of this it was difficult, but we felt as a family very disreputable at the time. Mr. Dod radiated sympathy for us. Poppa looked concerned.

"The fact is," said he, "we ought to have called on you at your London residence, Aunt Caroline. And if we had been able to make a more protracted stay than just about long enough, as you might say, to see what

time it was, we would have done so. But you see how it was."

"Pray don't mention it," said Mrs. Portheris. "It is very unlikely that I should have been at home."

"Then *that's* all right," poppa replied with relief.

"London has so many monuments," murmured Dicky Dod, regarding Mrs. Portheris's impressive back. "It is quite impossible to visit them all."

"The view from here," our relation remarked in a leave-taking tone, "is very beautiful, is it not?"

"It's very extensive," replied poppa, "but I notice the inhabitants round about seem to think it embraces the biggest part of civilisation. I admit it's a good-sized view, but that's what I call enlarging upon it."

"Come, Mr. Dod," commanded Mrs. Portheris, "we must rejoin the rest of our party. They are on the other side."

"Certainly," said Dicky. "But you must give me your address, Mrs. Wick. Thanks. And there now! I've been away from Illinois a good long time, but I'm not going to forget to congratulate Chicago on getting you once more into the United States Senate, Mr. Wick. I did what I could in my humble way, you know."

"I *know* you did, Richard," returned poppa warmly, "and if there's any little Consulship in foreign parts that it would amuse you to fill——"

Mrs. Portheris, in the act of exchanging unemotional farewells with mamma, turned round. "Do I understand that you are now a *Senator?*" she inquired. "I

had no idea of it. It is certainly a distinction—an American distinction, of course—but you can't help that. It does you credit. I trust you will use your influence to put an end to the Mormons."

"As far as that goes," poppa returned with deprecation, "I believe my business does take me to the Capitol pretty regularly now. But I'd be sorry to think any more of myself on that account. Your nephew, Aunt Caroline, is just the same plain American he was before."

"I hope you will vote to exterminate them," continued Mrs. Portheris with decision. "Dear me! A Senator—I suppose you must have a great deal of influence in your own country! Ah, here are the truants! We might all go down in the lift together."

The truants appeared looking conscious. One of them, when he saw me, looked astonished as well, and I cannot say that I myself was perfectly unmoved when I realised that it was Mr. Mafferton! There was no reason why Mr. Mafferton should not have been at the top of the Eiffel Tower in the society of Mrs. Portheris, Mr. Dod, and another, that afternoon, but for the moment it seemed to me uniquely amazing. We shook hands, however—it was the only thing to do—and Mr. Mafferton said this was indeed a surprise as if it were the most ordinary thing possible. Mrs. Portheris looked on at our greeting with an air of objecting to things she had not been taught to expect, and remarked that she had no idea Mr. Mafferton was one of my London

acquaintances. "But then," she continued in a tone of just reproach, "I saw so little of you during your season in town that you might have made the Queen's acquaintance and all the Royal Family, and I should have been none the wiser."

It was too much to expect of one's momma that she should let an opportunity like that slip, and mine took hold of it with both hands.

"I believe my daughter did make Victoria's acquaintance, Mrs. Portheris," said she, "and we were all very pleased about it. Your Queen has a very good reputation in our country. We think her a wise sovereign and a perfect lady. I suppose you often go to her Drawing Rooms."

Mrs. Portheris wore the expression of one passing through the Stone Age to a somewhat more mobile period. "I really think," she said, "I should have been made aware of that. To have had a young relative presented without one's knowledge seems *too* extraordinary. No," she continued, turning to poppa, "the only thing I heard of this young lady—it came to me in a *very* roundabout manner—was that she had gone home to be *married*. Was not that your intention?" asked Mrs. Portheris, turning to me.

"It was," I said. There was nothing else to say.

"Then may I inquire if you fulfilled it?"

"I didn't, Mrs. Portheris," said I. I was very red, but not so red as Mr. Mafferton. "Circumstances interfered." I was prepared for an inquiry as to what the

circumstances were, and privately made up my mind that Mrs. Portheris was too distant a relation to be gratified with such information in the publicity of the Eiffel Tower. But she merely looked at me with suspicion, and said it was much better that young people should discover their unsuitability to one another before marriage than after. "I can conceive nothing more shocking than divorce," said Mrs. Portheris, and her tone indicated that I had probably narrowly escaped it.

We were rather a large party as we made our way to the elevator, and I found myself behind the others in conversation with Dicky Dod. It was a happiness to come thus unexpectedly upon Dicky Dod—he gave forth all that is most exhilarating in our democratic civilisation, and he was in excellent spirits. As the young lady of Mrs. Portheris's party joined us I thought I found a barometric reading in Mr. Dod's countenance that explained the situation. "I remember you," she said shyly, and there was something in this innocent audacity and the blush which accompanied it that helped me to remember her too. "You came to see mamma in Half Moon-street once. I am Isabel."

"Dear me!" I replied, "so you are. I remember —you had to go upstairs, hadn't you. Please don't mind," I went on hastily as Isabel looked distressed, "you couldn't help it. I was very unexpected, and I might have been dangerous. How—how you've *grown!*" I really couldn't think of anything else to say.

Isabel blushed again, Dicky observing with absorbed adoration. It *was* lovely colour. "You know I haven't really," she said, "it's all one's long frocks and doing up one's hair, you know."

"Miss Portheris only came out two months ago," remarked Mr. Dod, with the effect of announcing that Venus had just arisen from the foam.

"Come, young people," Mrs. Portheris exclaimed from the lift; "we are waiting for you." Poppa and momma and Mr. Mafferton were already inside. Mrs. Portheris stood in the door. As Isabel entered, I saw that Mr. Dod was making the wildest efforts to communicate something to me with his left eye.

"Come, young people," repeated Mrs. Portheris.

"Do you think it's safe for so many?" asked Dicky doubtfully. "Suppose anything should *give*, you know!"

Mrs. Portheris looked undecided. Momma, from the interior, immediately proposed to get out.

"Safe as a church," remarked the Senator.

"What *do* you mean, Dod?" demanded Mr. Mafferton.

"Well, it's like this," said Dicky; "Miss Wick is rather nervous about overcrowding, and I think it's better to run no risks myself. You all go down, and we'll follow you next trip. See?"

"I suppose you will hardly allow *that*, Mrs. Wick," said our relation, with ominous portent.

"*Est ce que vous voulez à déscendre, monsieur?*"

inquired the official attached to the elevator, with some impatience.

"I don't see what there is to object to—I suppose it *would* be safer," momma replied anxiously, and the official again demanded if we were going down.

"Not this trip, thank you," said Dicky, and turned away. Mrs. Portheris, who had taken her seat, rose with dignity. "In that case," said she, "I also will remain at the top;" but her determination arrived too late. With a ferocious gesture the little official shut the door and gave the signal, and Mrs. Portheris sank earthwards, a vision of outraged propriety. I felt sorry for momma.

"And now," I inquired of Mr. Dod, "why was the elevator not safe?"

"I'll tell you," said Dicky. "Do you know Mrs. Portheris well?"

"Very slightly indeed," I replied.

"Not well enough to—sort of chum up with our party, I suppose."

"Not for worlds," said I.

Dicky looked so disconsolate that I was touched.

"Still," I said, "you'd better trot out the circumstances, Dicky. We haven't forgotten what you did in your humble way, you know, at election time. I can promise for the family that we'll do anything we can. You mustn't ask us to poison her, but we might lead her into the influenza."

"It's this way," said Mr. Dod. "How remarkably contracted the Place de la Concorde looks down there, doesn't it! It's like looking through the wrong end of an opera glass."

"I've observed that," I said. "It won't be fair to keep them waiting *very* long down there on the earth, you know, Dicky."

"Certainly not! Well, as I was saying, your poppa's Aunt Caroline is a perfect fiend of a chaperone. By Jove, Mamie, let's be silhouetted!"

"Poppa was silhouetted," I said, "and the artist turned him out the image of Senator Frye. Now he doesn't resemble Senator Frye in the least degree. The elevator is ascending, Richard."

Richard blushed and looked intently at the horizon beyond Montmartre.

"You see, between Miss Portheris and me, it's this way," he began recklessly, but with the vision before my eyes of momma on the steps below wanting her tea, I cut him short.

"So far as you are concerned, Dicky, I see the way it is," I interposed sympathetically. "The question is——"

"Exactly. So it is. About Isabel. But I can't find out. It seems to be so difficult with an English girl. Doesn't seem to think such a thing as a—a proposal exists. Now an American girl is just as ready——"

"Richard," I interrupted severely, "the circum-

stances do not require international comparisons. By the way, how do you happen to be travelling with—with Mr. Mafferton?"

"That's exactly where it comes in," Mr. Dod exclaimed luminously. "You'd think, the way Mafferton purrs round the old lady, he'd been a friend of the family from the beginning of time! Fact is, he met them two days before they left London. *I* had known them a good month, and the venerable one seemed to take to me considerably. There wasn't a cab she wouldn't let me call, nor a box at the theatre she wouldn't occupy, nor a supper she wouldn't try to enjoy. Used to ask me to tea. Inquired whether I was High or Low. That was awful, because I had to chance it, being Congregational, but I hit it right—she's Low, too, strong. Isabel always made the tea out of a canister the old lady kept locked. Singular habit that, locking tea up in a canister."

"You are wandering, Dicky," I said. "And Isabel used to ask you whether you would have muffins or brown bread and butter—I know. Go on."

"Girls *have* intuition," remarked Mr. Dod with a glance of admiration which I discounted with contempt. "Well, then old Mafferton turned up here a week ago. Since then I haven't been waltzing in as I did before. Old lady seems to think there's a chance of keeping the family pure English—seems to think she'd like it better—see? At least, I take it that way; he's cousin to a lord," Dick added dejectedly, "and you

know financially I've been coming through a cold season."

"It's awkward," I admitted, "but old ladies of no family are like that over here. I know Mrs. Portheris is an old lady of no family, because she's a connection of ours, you see. What about Isabel? Can't you tell the least bit?"

"How can a fellow? She blushes just as much when he speaks to her as when I do."

"But are you quite sure," I asked delicately, "whether Mr. Mafferton is—interested?"

"There's the worst kind of danger of it," Dicky replied impressively. "I don't know whether I ought to tell you, but the fact is Mafferton's just got the sack —I beg your pardon—just been *congéed* himself. They say she was an American and it was a bad case; she behaved most unfeelingly."

"You shouldn't believe all you hear," I said, "but I don't see what that has to do with it."

"Why, he's just in the mood to console himself. What fellow would think twice of being thrown over, if Miss Portheris were the alternative!"

"It depends, Dicky," I observed. "You are jumping at conclusions."

"What I hoped," he went on regretfully as we took our places in the elevator, "was that we might travel together a bit and that you wouldn't mind just now and then taking old Mafferton off our hands, you know."

"Dicky," I said, as we swiftly descended, "here is

our itinerary. Genoa, you see, then Pisa, Rome, Naples, Rome again, Florence, Venice, Verona, up through the lakes to Switzerland, and so on. We leave to-morrow. If we *should* meet again, I don't promise to undertake it personally, but I'll see what momma can do."



Breakfast with Dicky Dod.

CHAPTER VIII.

Poppa said as we steamed out of Paris that night that the Presidency itself would not induce him to reside there, and I think he meant it. I don't know whether the omnibus *numeros* and the *correspondances* where you change, or the men sitting staring on the side walks drinking things for hours at a time, or getting no vegetables to speak of with his joint, annoyed him most, but he was very decided in his views. Momma and I were not quite so certain; we had a guilty sense of ingratitude when we thought of the creations in the van; but the cobblestones biassed momma a good deal, who hoped she should get some sleep in Italy. I had breakfasted that morning in the most amusing way with Dicky Dod at a *café* in the Champs Elysées—poppa and momma had an engagement with Mr. and Mrs. Malt and couldn't come—and in the leniency of the recollection I said something favourable about the Arc de Triomphe at sunset; but I gathered from the Senator's remarks that, while the sunset was fine enough, he didn't see the propriety in using it that way as a background for Napoleon Bonaparte, so to speak.

"Result is," said the Senator, "the intelligent for-

eigner's got pretty nearly to go out of the town to see a sunset without having to think about Aboukir and Alexandria. But that's Paris all over. There isn't a street, or a public building, or a statue, or a fountain, or a thing that doesn't shout at you, 'Look at me! Think about me! Your admiration or your life!' Those Frenchmen don't mind it because it only repeats what they're always saying themselves, but if you're a foreigner it gets on your nerves. That city is too uniformly fine to be of much use to me—it keeps me all the time wondering why I'm not in one eternal good humour to match. There's good old London now—always looks, I should think, just as you feel. Looks like history, too, and change, and contrast, and the different varieties of the human lot."

"I see what you mean, poppa," I said. "There's too much equality in Paris, isn't there—to be interesting," but the Senator was too deeply engaged in getting out momma's smelling salts to corroborate this interpretation.

It is a very long way to Genoa if you don't stop at Aix-les-Bains or anywhere—twenty-four hours—but Mont Cenis occurs in the night, which is suitable in a tunnel. There came a chill through the darkness that struck to one's very marrow, and we all rose with one accord and groped about for more rugs. When broad daylight came it was Savoy, and we realised what we had been through. The Senator was inclined to deplore missing the realisation of the Mont Cenis, and it was

only when momma said it was a pity he hadn't taken a train that would have brought us through in the daytime and enabled him to examine it, that he ceased to express regret. My parents are often vehicles of philosophy for each other.

Besides, in the course of the morning the Senator acknowledged that he got more tunnels than he had any idea he had paid for. They came with a precipitancy that interfered immensely with any connected idea of the scenery, though momma, in my interest, did her best to form one. "Note, my love," she said, as we began to penetrate the frontier country, "that majestic blue summit on the horizon to the left"—obliteration, and another tunnel! "*Don't* miss that jagged line of snows just beyond the back of poppa's head, dear one. Quick! they are melting away!"—but the next tunnel was quicker. "Put down that the dazzling purity of these lovely peaks must be realised, for it cannot be"—darkness, and the blight of another tunnel. It was very hard on momma's imagination, and she finally accepted the Senator's warning that it would be thrown completely out of gear if she went on, and abandoned the attempt to form complete sentences between tunnels. It was much simpler to exclaim "Splendid!" or "Glorious!" which one could generally do without being interrupted.

We were not prepared to enjoy anything when we arrived at Genoa, but there was Christopher Columbus in bronze, just outside the station in a little place by

himself, and we felt bound to give him our attention before we went any further. He was patting America on the head, both of them life size, and carrying on that historical argument with his sailors in bas-relief below; and he looked a very fine character. As poppa said, he was just the man you would pick out to discover America. The Senator also remarked that you could see from the position of the statue, right there in full view of the travelling public, that the Genoese thought a lot of Columbus; relied upon him, in fact, as their biggest attraction. Momma examined him from the carriage. She said it was most gratifying to see him there in his own home, so to speak; but her enthusiasm did not induce her to get out. Momma's patriotism has always to be considered in connection with the state of her nerves.

The state of all our nerves was healed in a quarter of an hour. The Senator showed his coupons somewhat truculently, but they were received as things of price with disarming bows and real gladness. We were led through rambling passages into lofty white chambers, with marble floors and iron bedsteads, full of simplicity and cleanliness, where we removed all recollections of Paris without being obliged to consider a stuffy carpet or satin-covered furniture. Italy, in the persons of the *portier* and the chambermaid, laid hold of us with intelligible smiles, and we were charmed. Inside, the place was full of long free lines and cool polished surfaces, and pleasant curves. Outside, a thick-fronded

palm swayed in the evening wind against a climbing hill of many-tinted, many-windowed houses, in all the soft colours we knew of before. When the *portier* addressed momma as "Signora" her cup of bliss ran over, and she made up her mind that she felt able, after all, to go down to dinner.

Remembering their sentiments, we bowed as slightly as possible when we saw the Miss Binghams across the table, and the Senator threw that into his voice, as he inquired how they liked *la belle Italie* so far, and whether they had had any trouble with their trunks coming in, which might have given them to understand that his politeness was very perfunctory. If they perceived it, they allowed it to influence them the other way, however. They asked, almost as cordially as if we were middle-class English people, whether we had actually survived that trip to Versailles, and forbore to comment when we said we had enjoyed it, beyond saying that if there was one enviable thing it was the American capacity for pleasure. Yet one could see quite plainly that the vacuum caused by the absence of the American capacity for pleasure was filled in their case by something very superior to it.

"This city new to you?" asked the Senator as the meal progressed.

"In a *sense*, yes," replied Miss Nancy Bingham.

"We've never *studied* it before," said Miss Cora.

"I suppose it has a fascination all its own," remarked momma.

"Oh, rather!" exclaimed Miss Nancy Bingham, and I reflected that when she was in England she must have seen a great deal of school-boy society. I decided at once, noting its effect upon the lips of a middle-aged maiden lady, that momma must not be allowed to pick up the expression.

"It's simply full of associations of old families—the Dorias, the Pallavicinis, the Durazzos," remarked Miss Cora. "Do you gloat on the mediæval?"

"We're perfectly prepared to," said the Senator. "I believe we've got both Murray and Baedeker for this place. Now do you commit your facts to memory before going to bed the night previous, or do you learn them up as you go along?"

"Oh," said Miss Nancy Bingham, "we are of the opinion that one should always visit these places with a mind prepared. Though I myself have no objection to carrying a guide-book, provided it is covered with brown paper."

"Then you acquire it all beforehand," commented the Senator. "That, I must say, is commendable of you. And it's certainly the only business-like way of proceeding. The amount of time a person loses fooling over Baedeker on the spot——"

"One of us does," acknowledged Miss Nancy. "We take it in turns. And I must say it is generally my sister." And she turned to Miss Cora, who blushed and said, "How can you, Nancy!"

"And you use her, for that particular public build-

ing or historic scene, as a sort of portable, self-acting reference library," remarked poppa. "That's an idea that commends itself to me, daughter, in connection with you."

I was about to reply in terms of deprecation, when a confusion of sound drifted in from the street, of arriving cabs and expostulating voices. The Miss Binghams looked at each other in consternation and said with one accord, "It *was* the *Fulda!*"

"Was it?" inquired poppa. "Do you refer to the German Lloyd steamship of that name?"

"We do," said Miss Nancy. "About an hour ago we were sure we saw her steaming into the harbour."

"She comes from New York, I suppose," momma remarked.

"She does indeed," said Miss Nancy, "and she's been lying at the docks unloading Americans ever since she arrived. And here they are. Cora, have you finished?"

Cora said she had, and without further parley the ladies rose and rustled away. Their invading fellow-countrymen gratefully took their places, and the Senator sent a glance of scorn after them strong enough to make them turn round. After dinner, we saw a collection of cabin trunks and valises standing in the entrance hall labelled BINGHAM, and knew that Miss Nancy and Miss Cora were again in flight before the Nemesis of the American Eagle. I will not repeat poppa's sentiments.

On the hotel doorstep next morning waited Alessandro Bebbini. He waited for us—an hour and a half, because momma had some re-packing to do and we were going on next day. Nobody had asked him to wait, but he had a carriage ready and the look of having been ordered three months previously. He presented his card to the Senator, who glanced at him and said, "Do I *look* as if I wanted a shave?"

Alessandro Bebbini smiled—an olive flash of pity and amusement. "I make not the shava, Signore," he said, "I am the courier—for your kind dispositione I am here."

"You should *never* judge foreigners by their appearance, Alexander," rebuked momma.

"Well, Mr. Bebbini," said the Senator, "I guess I've got to apologise to you. You see they told me inside there that I should probably find a—a tonsorial artist out here on the steps"—poppa never minds telling a story to save people's feelings. "But you haven't convinced me," he continued, "that I've got any use for a courier."

"You wish see Genoa—is it not?"

"Well, yes," replied the Senator, "it is."

"Then with me you come alonga. I will translate you the city—shoppia, pallass—w'at you like. Also I am not dear man neither. In the season yes. Then I am very dear. But now is nobody."

"What does your time cost to buy?" demanded poppa.

"Very cheap price. Two francs one hour. Ten francs one day. But if with you I travel, make arrangimento, you und'stan', look for traina—'otel, *biglietto*, *bagaglia*—then I am so little you laugh. Two 'undred franc the month!" and Alessandro indicated with every muscle of his body the amazement he expected us to feel.

The Senator turned to the ladies of his family. "Now that I think of it," he said, "travels in Italy are never written without a courier. People wouldn't believe they were authentic. And Bramley said if you really wanted to enjoy yourself it was folly not to engage one."

"I suppose there's more *choice* in the season," said momma, glancing disapprovingly at Alessandro's swarthy collar. "And I confess I should have expected them to be garbed more picturesquely."

"Look at his language," I remarked. "You can't have everything."

The Senator said that was so. "I believe you can come along, Mr. Bebbini," he said; "we're strangers here and we'll get you to help us to enjoy ourselves for a month on the terms you name. You can begin right away."

Alessandro bowed and waved us to the carriage. It was only the ordinary commercial bow of Italy, but I could see that it made a difference to momma. He saw us seated and was climbing on the box when poppa interfered. "There's no use trying to work it that way,"

he said; "we can't ask you to twist your head off every time you emit a piece of information. Besides, there's no sense in your riding on the box when there's an extra seat. You won't crowd us any, Mr. Bebbini, and I guess we can refrain from discussing family matters for *one* hour."

So we started, with Mr. Bebbini at short range.

"I think," said he, "you lika first off the 'ouse of Cristoforo Colombo."

"I don't see how you knew," said poppa, "but you are perfectly correct. Cristoforo was one of the most distinguished Americans on the roll of history, and we, also, are Americans. At once, at once to the habitation of Cristoforo."

Alessandro leaned forward impressively.

"Who informa you Cristoforo Colombo was Americano? Better you don't believe these other guide—ignoranta fella. Cristoforo was Genoa man, born here, you und'stan'? Italiano. Only live in America a lill' w'ile—to discover, you und'stan'?"

"Mr. Bebbini," said poppa, "if you go around contradicting Americans on the subject of Christopher Columbus your business will decrease. As a matter of fact, Christopher wasn't born, he was made, and America made him. He has every right to claim to be considered an American, and it was a little careless of him not to have founded a family there. We make excuses for him—it's quite true he had very little time at his disposal—but we feel it, the whole nation of us, to this day."

The Via Balbi was cheerfully crooked and crowded, it had the modern note of the street car, and the mediæval one of old women, arms akimbo, in the nooks and recesses, selling big black cherries and bursting figs. Even the old women though, as momma complained, wore postilion basques and bell skirts, certainly in an advanced stage of usefulness, but of unmistakable genesis—just what had been popular in Chicago a year or two before.

"Really, my love," said momma, "I don't know *what* we shall do for description in Genoa, the people seem to wear no clothes worth mentioning whatever." We concluded that all the city's characteristically Italian garments were in the wash; they depended in novel cut and colour from every window that did not belong to a bank or a university; and sometimes, when the side street was narrow and the houses high, the effect was quite imposing. Poppa asked Alessandro Bebbini whether they were expecting royalty or anything, or whether it was like this every washing day, and we gathered that there was nothing unusual about it. But poppa said I had better mention it so that people might be prepared. Personally, I rather liked the display, it gave such unexpected colour and incident to those high-shouldering, narrow by-ways we looked down into from the upper level of the Via Balbi, where only here and there the sun strove through, and all the rest was a rich toned mystery; but there may be others like momma, who prefer the

clothes line of the Occident and the privacy of the back yard.

The two sides of the *Via Poverina* almost touched foreheads. "Yes," said Alessandro Bebbini apologetically, "it is a *ver'* tight street.'

Poppa was extremely pleased with the appearance of the house of Christopher Columbus, which Alessandro pointed out in the Via Assorotti. It was a comfortable looking edifice, with stone giants supporting the arch of the doorway, in every respect suitable as the residence of a retired navigator of distinction. Poppa said it was very gratifying to find that Cristoforo had been able, in his declining years, when he was our only European representative, to keep his end up with credit to America.

You so often found the former abodes of glorious names with a modern rental out of all proportion with their historic interest. This house, poppa calculated, would let to-day at a figure discreditable neither to Cristoforo himself, nor to the United States of America. Mr. Bebbini, unfortunately, could not tell him what that figure was.

On the steps of San Lorenzo Cathedral momma paused and cast a searching glance into all the corners.

"Where are the beggars?" she inquired, not without injury. "I have *always* been given to understand that church entrances in Italy were disgracefully thronged with beggars of the lowest type. I have never seen a picture of a sacred building without them!"

"So that was why you wanted so much small change, Augusta," said the Senator. "Mr. Bebbini says there's a law against them nowadays. Now that you mention it, I'm disappointed there too. Municipal progress in Italy is something you've not prepared for somehow. I daresay if we only knew it, they're thinking of lighting this town with electricity, and the Board of Aldermen are considering contracts for cable cars."

"Do not inquire, Alexander," begged momma, but the Senator had fallen behind with Mr. Bebbini in earnest conversation, and we gathered that its import was entirely modern.

It was our first Italian church and it was impressive, for a President of the French Republic had just fallen to the knife of an Italian assassin, and from the altar to the door San Lorenzo was in mourning and in penance. Masses for his soul's repose had that day been said and sung; near the door hung a request for the prayers of all good Christians to this end. Many of the grave-eyed people that came and went were doubtless about this business, but one, I know, was there on a private errand. He prayed at a chapel aside, kneeling on the floor beside the railings, his cap in his hands, grasping it just as the peasant in The Angelus grasps his. Inside the altar hung a picture of a pitying woman, and there were candles and foolish flowers of tinsel, but beside these, many tokens of hearts, gold and silver, thick below the altar, crowding the partition walls. The hearts were grateful ones—Alessandro explained

in an under-tone—brought and left by many who had been preserved from violent death by the saint there, and he who knelt was a workman just from hospital, who had fallen, with his son, from a building. The boy had been killed, the father only badly hurt. His heart token was the last—a little common thing—and tied with no rejoiceful ribbon but with a scrap of crape. I hoped Heaven would see the crape as well as the tribute. When we went away he was still kneeling in his patched blue cotton clothes, and as the saint had very beautiful kind eyes, and all the tinsel flowers were standing in the glowing light of stained glass, and the voice of the Church had begun to speak too, through the organ, I daresay he went away comforted.

Momma says there is only one thing she recollects clearly about San Lorenzo, and that is the Chapel of St. John the Baptist. This does not remain in her memory because of the *Cinquecento* screen or the altar-canopy's porphyry pillars which we know we must have seen because the guide-book says they are there, but because of the fact that Pope Innocent the Eighth had it closed to our sex for a long time, except on one day of the year, on account of Herodias. Momma considered this extremely invidious of Innocent the Eighth, and said it was a thing no man except a Pope would have thought of doing. What annoyed poppa was that she seemed to hold Alessandro Bebbini responsible, and covered him with reproaches, in the guise of argument, which he neither deserved nor understood. And when poppa

suggested that she was probably as much to blame for Herodias's conduct as Mr. Bebbini was for the Pope's, she said that had nothing whatever to do with it, and she thanked Heaven she was born a Protestant anyway, distinctly implying that Herodias was a Roman Catholic. And if poppa didn't wish her back to give out altogether, would he please return to the carriage.

We wandered through a palace or two and thought how interesting it must have been to be rich in the days of "Sir Horatio Palavasene, who robbed the Pope to pay the Queen." Wealth had its individuality in those days, and expressed itself with truth and splendour in sculpture, and picture, and tapestry, and precious things, with the picturesqueness of contrast and homage. As the Senator said, a banquet hall did not then suggest a Fifth Avenue hairdresser's saloon. But now the Genoese merchant-princes would find that their state had lost its identity in machine made imitations, and that it would be more distinguished to be poor, since poverty is never counterfeited. But poppa declined to go as far as that.

Alessandro, as we drove round and up the winding roads that take one to the top of Genoa—the hotels and the palaces and the churches are mostly at the bottom—was full of joyous and rapid information. Especially did he continue to be communicative on the subject of Christopher Columbus, and if we are not now assured of the school that discoverer attended in his youth, and the altar rails before which he took the first communion

of his early manhood, and the occupation of his wife's parents, and many other matters concerning him, it is the fault of history and not that of Alessandro Bebbini. After a cathedral and a palace and a long drive, this was bound to have its effect, and I very soon saw resentment in the demeanour of both my parents. So much so, that when we passed the family group in memory of Mazzini, and Alessandro explained dramatically that "the daughter he sitta down and cryo because his father is a-dead," poppa said, "Is that so?" without the faintest show of excitement, and momma declined even to look round.

It was not until the evening, however, when we were talking to some Milwaukee people, that we remembered, with the assistance of Baedeker and the Milwaukee people, a number of facts about Columbus that deprived Alessandro's information of its commercial value, while leaving his ingenuity, so to speak, at par. The Senator was so much annoyed, as he had made a special note of the state of preservation in which he had found the dwelling of our discoverer, that he had recourse to the most unscrupulous means of relieving us of Alessandro —who was to present himself next morning at eleven. He wrote an impulsive letter to "A. Bebbini, Esq.," which ran:

"Sir: I find that we are too credulous a family to travel in safety with a courier. When you arrive at the hotel to-morrow, therefore, you will discover that we

have fled by an earlier train. We take it from no personal objection to your society, but from a rooted and unconquerable objection to brass facts. I enclose your month's salary and a warning that any attempt to follow me will be fruitless and expensive.

"Yours truly,
"J. P. Wick."

The Senator assured me afterwards that this was absolutely necessary—that A. Bebbini, if we introduced him in any quantity, would ruin the sale of our work, and if he accompanied us it would be impossible to keep him out. He said we ought to apologize for having even mentioned him in a book of travels which we hope to see taken seriously. And we do.

CHAPTER IX.

Momma wishes me to state that the word Italy, in any language, will for ever be associated in her mind with the journey from Genoa to Pisa. We had our own lunch basket, so no baneful anticipation of cutlets fried in olive oil marred the perfect satisfaction with which we looked out of the windows. One window, almost the whole way, opened on a low embankment which seemed a garden wall. Olives and lemon trees grew beyond it and dropped over, and it was always dipping in the sunlight to show us the roses and the shady walks of the villas inside, white and remote; now and then we saw the pillared end of a verandah or a plaster Neptune ruling a restricted fountain area. Out of the other window stretched the blue Gulf of Genoa all becalmed and smiling, with freakish little points and headlines, and here and there the white blossom of a sail. The Senator counted eighty tunnels—he wants that fact mentioned too—some of them so short that it was like shutting one's eyes for an instant on the olives and the sea. Nevertheless it was an idyllic journey, and at four o'clock in the afternoon we saw the Leaning Tower from afar, describing the precise angle that it does in the illus-

trated geographies. Momma was charmed to recognise it, she blew it a kiss of adulation and acclaim, while we yet wound about among the environs, and hailed it "Pisa!" It was as if she bowed to a celebrity, with the homage due.

What the Senator called our attention to as we drove to the hotel was the conspicuous part in municipal politics played by that little old brown river Arno. In most places the riparian feature of the landscape is not insisted on—you have usually to go to the suburbs to find it, but in Pisa it is a sort of main street, with the town sitting comfortably and equally on each side of it looking on. Momma and I both liked the idea of a river in town scenery, and thought it might be copied with advantage in America, it afforded such a good excuse for bridges. Pisa's three arched stone ones made a reason for settling there in themselves in our opinion. The Senator, however, was against it on conservancy grounds, and asked us what we thought of the population of Pisa. And we had to admit that for the size of the houses there weren't very many people about. The Lungarno was almost empty except for desolate cabmen, and they were just as eager and hospitable to us and our trunks as they had been in Genoa.

In the Piazza del Duomo we expected the Cathedral, the Leaning Tower, the Baptistry, and the Campo Santo. We did not expect Mrs. Portheris; at least, neither of my parents did—I knew enough about Dicky Dod not to be surprised at any combination he might

effect. There they all were in the middle of the square bit of meadow, apparently waiting for us, but really, I have no doubt, getting an impression of the architecture as a whole. I could tell from Mrs. Portheris's attitude that she had acknowledged herself to be gratified. Strange to relate, her gratification did not disappear when she saw that these mediæval circumstances would inconsistently compel her to recognise very modern American connections. She approached us quite blandly, and I saw at once that Dicky Dod had been telling her that poppa's chances for the Presidency were considered certain, that the Spanish Infanta had stayed with us while she was in Chicago at the Exhibition, and that we fed her from gold plate. It was all in Mrs. Portheris's manner.

"Another unexpected meeting!" she exclaimed. "My dear Mrs. Wick, you *are* looking worn out! Try my sal volatile—I insist!" and in the general greeting momma was seen to back violently away from a long silver bottle in every direction. Poppa had to interfere. "If it's all the same to you, Aunt Caroline," he said, "Mrs. Wick is quite as usual, though I think the Middle Agedness of this country is a little trying for her at this time of year. She's just a little upset this morning by seeing the cook plucking a rooster down in the backyard before he'd killed it. The rooster was in great affliction, you see, and the way he crowed got on momma's nerves. She's been telling us about it ever since. But we hope it will pass off."

Mrs. Portheris expanded into that inevitable British story of the officer who reported of certain tribes that they had no manners and their customs were abominable, and I, at a mute invitation from Dicky, stepped aside to get the angle of the Tower from a better point of view.

Mr. Dod was depressed, so much so that he came to the point at once. "I hope you had a good time in Genoa," he said. "We should have been there now, only I knew we should never catch up to you if we didn't skip something. So I heard of a case of cholera there, and didn't mention that it was last year. Quite enough for Her Ex. I say, though—it's no use."

"Isn't it?" said I. "Are you sure?"

"Pretty confoundedly certain. The British lion's getting there, in great shape—the brute. All the widow's arranging. With the widow it's 'Mr. Dod, you will take care of *me*, won't you?' or 'Come now, Mr. Dod, and tell me all about buffalo shooting on your native prairies'—and Mr. Dod is a rattled jay. There's something about the mandate of a middle-aged British female."

"I should think there was!" I said.

"Then Maffy, you see, walks in. They don't seem to have much conversation—she regularly brightens up when I come along and say something cheerful—but he's gradually making up his mind that the best isn't any too good for him."

"Perhaps we don't begin so well in America," I

interrupted thoughtfully. "But then, we don't develop into Mrs. P.'s either."

Dicky seemed unable to follow my line of thought. "I must say," he went on resentfully, "I like—well, just a *smell* of constancy about a man. A fellow that's thrown over ought to be in about the same shape as a widower. But not much Maffy. I tried to work up his feelings over the American girl the other night—he was as calm!"

"Dicky," said I, "there are subjects a man *must* keep sacred. You must not speak to Mr. Mafferton of his first—attachment again. They never do it in England, except for purposes of fiction."

"Well, I worked that racket all I knew. I even told him that American girls as often as not changed their minds."

"*Richard!* He will think I—what *will* he think of American girls! It was excessively wrong of you to say that—I might almost call it criminal!"

Dicky looked at me in pained surprise. "Look here, Mamie," he said, "a fellow in my fix, you know! Don't get excited. How am I going to confide in you unless you keep your hair on!"

"What, may I ask, did Mr. Mafferton say when you told him that?" I asked sternly.

"He said—now you'll be madder than ever. I won't tell you."

"Mr. Dod—Dicky, haven't we been friends from infancy!"

"Played with the same rattle. Cut our teeth together."

"Well then——"

"Well then," he said, "do you mind putting your parasol straight? I like to see the person I'm talking to, and besides the sun is on the other side. He said he didn't think it was a privilege that should be extended to all cases."

"He did, did he?" I rejoined calmly. "That's like the British—isn't it?"

"It would have made such a complication if I'd kicked him," confessed Mr. Dod.

The Senator, momma, and Mrs. Portheris stood in the cathedral door. Isabel and Mr. Mafferton occupied the middle distance. Mr. Mafferton stooped to add a poppy to a slender handful of wild flowers he held out to her. Isabel was looking back.

"It will be pleasant inside the Duomo," I said. "Let us go on. I feel warm. I agree with you that the situation is serious, Dicky. Look at those poppies! When an Englishman does that you may make up your mind to the worst. But I don't think anybody need have the slightest respect for the affections of Mr. Mafferton."

Inside the Duomo it was pleasant, and cool, and there was a dim religious light that gave one an opportunity for reflection. I was so much engaged in reflection that I failed to notice the shape of the Duomo, but I have since learned that it was a basilica, in the

form of a Latin cross, and was simply full of things which should have claimed my attention. Momma took copious notes from which I see that the Madonna and Child holy water basin was perfectly sweet, and the episcopal throne by Uervellesi in 1536 was the finest piece of tarsia work in the world, and the large bronze hanging lamp by Vincenzo Possento was the object which assisted Galileo to invent the oscillations of the pendulum. The Senator was much taken with the inlaid wooden stalls in the choir, the subjects were so lively. He and his Aunt Caroline nearly came to words over a monkey regarding its reflection in a looking glass, done with a realism which Mrs. Portheris considered little short of profane, but which poppa found quite an excusable filip to devotions which must have been such an all day business in the sixteenth century. Outside, however, poppa found it difficult to approve the façade. To throw four galleries over the street door, he said, with no visible means of getting into them or possible object for sitting there, was about the most ridiculous waste of building space he had yet observed.

"But then," said Dicky Dod, who kept his disconsolate place by my side, "they didn't seem to know how to waste enough in those pre-elevator days. Look at the pictures and the bronzes and the marble columns inside there—ten times as much as they had any use for. They just heaped it up."

"That's so, Dicky, my boy," replied poppa; "we could cover more ground with the money in our cen-

tury. But you've got to remember that they hadn't any other way worth mentioning of spending the taxes. Religion, so to speak, was the boss contractor's only line."

Dicky remarked that it had to be admitted he worked it on the square, and momma said that no doubt people built as well as they knew how at that time, but nothing should induce her to add her weight to the top of the Leaning Tower.

"It is very remarkable and impressive," said momma, "the idea of its hanging over that way all these centuries, just on the drop and never dropping, but who knows that it may not come down this very day!"

"My dear niece, if I may call you so," remarked Mrs. Portheris urbanely, "it was thus that the builders designed this great monument to stand; in its inclination lies the triumph of their art."

"I can't say I agree with you there, Aunt Caroline," said poppa; "that tower was never meant to stand crooked. It's a very serious defect, and if it happened nowadays, it would justify any Municipal Board in repudiating the contract. Even those fellows, you see, were too sick to go on with it, in every case. Begun by Bonanus 1174. Bonanus saw what was going to happen and gave it up at the third storey. Then Benenato had *his* show, got it up to four, and quit, 1203. The next architect was—let me see—William of Innsbruck. He put on a couple more, and by that time it began to look dangerous. But nothing happened from

1260 to 1350, and it struck Tomaso Pisano that nothing would happen. He risked it anyhow, ran up another storey, put the roof on, and came in for the credit of the whole miracle. I expect Tomaso is at the bottom of that idea of yours, Aunt Caroline. He would naturally give the reporters that view."

Mrs. Portheris listened with a tolerance as badly put on as any garment she was wearing. "I do not usually make assertions," she said when poppa had finished, "without being convinced of the facts," and I became aware for the first time that her upper lip wore a slight moustache.

"Well, you'll excuse me, Aunt Caroline——"

"All my life I have heard of the Leaning Tower of Pisa as a feat of architecture," replied his Aunt Caroline firmly. "I do not propose to have that view disturbed now."

"Perhaps it *was* so, my dear love," put in momma deprecatingly, and Mr. Dod, with a frenzied wink at poppa, called his attention to the ridiculous Pisan habit of putting immovable fringed carriage-tops on cabs.

"It undoubtedly was," said Mrs. Portheris, with an embattled front.

"But—Great Scott, aunt!" exclaimed poppa, recklessly, "think what this place was like—all marsh, with the sea right alongside; not four miles off as it is now. Why, you couldn't base so much as a calculation on it!"

"I must say," said Mrs. Portheris in severe sur-

prise, "I knew that America had made great advances in the world of invention, but I did not expect to find what looks much like jealousy of the achievements of an older civilisation."

The Senator looked at his aunt, then he put his hat further back on his head and cleared his throat. I prepared for the worst, and the worst would undoubtedly have come if Dicky Dod had not suddenly remembered having seen a man with a foreign telegram looking for somebody in the Cathedral.

"It's a feat!" reiterated Mrs. Portheris as the Senator left us in pursuit of the man with the telegram.

"It's fourteen feet," cried the Senator from a safe distance, "out of the perpendicular!" and left us to take the consequences.

CHAPTER X.

When momma reported to me Mrs. Portheris's proposition that we should make the rest of our Continental trip as one undivided party, I found it difficult to understand.

"These sudden changes of temperature," I remarked, "are trying to the constitution. Why this desire for the society of three unabashed Americanisms like ourselves?"

"That's just what I wondered," said momma. "For you can *see* that she is full of insular prejudice against our great country. She makes no attempt to disguise it."

"She never did," I assented.

"She said it seemed so extraordinary—quite providential—meeting relatives abroad in this way," momma continued, "and she thought we ought to follow it up."

"Are we going to?" I inquired.

"My goodness gracious no, love! There are some things my nerves cannot stand the strain of, and one of them is your poppa's Aunt Caroline. The Senator smoothed it over. He said he was sure we were very

much obliged, but our time was limited, and he thought we could get around faster alone."

"Well," I said, "I do not understand it, unless Dicky has persuaded her that poppa is to be our next ambassador to St. James's."

"She was too silly about Dicky," said momma. "She said she really was afraid, before you appeared, that young Mr. Dod was conceiving an attachment for her Isabel, whose affections lay *quite* in another direction; but now her mind was entirely at rest. I don't remember her words, she uses so many, but she was trying to hint that poor Dicky was an admirer of *yours*, dearest."

"I fancy she succeeded—as far as that goes," I remarked.

"Well, yes, she made me understand her. So I felt obliged to tell her that, though Dicky was a lovely fellow and we were all very fond of him, anything of *that* kind was out of the question."

"And what," I asked, "was her reply to that?"

"She seemed to think I was prevaricating. She said she knew what a mother's hopes and fears were. They seem to take a very low view," added momma austerely, "of friendship between a young man and a young woman in England!"

"I should think so!" said I absent-mindedly. "Dicky hasn't made love to me for three years."

"*What!*"

"Nothing, momma, dear," I replied kindly. "Only

I wouldn't contradict Mrs. Portheris again upon that point, if I were you. She will think it so improper if Dicky *isn't* my admirer, don't you see?"

But Mrs. Portheris's desire to join our party stood revealed. Her constant chaperonage of Dicky was getting a little trying, and she wanted me to relieve her. I felt so deeply for them both, reflecting upon the situation, that I experienced quite a glow of virtue at the thought of my promise to Dicky to stay in Rome till his party arrived. They were going to Siena—why, Mr. Dod could not undertake to explain—he had never heard of anything cheerful in connection with Siena.

"My idea is," said the Senator, "that in Rome"—we were on our way there—"we'll find our work cut out for us. Think of the objects of interest involved from Romulus and Remus down to the present Pope!"

"I should like my salts before I begin," said momma, pathetically.

"Over two thousand years," continued the Senator impressively, "and every year you may be sure has left its architectural imprint."

"Does Baedeker say that, Senator?" I asked, with a certain severity.

"No, the expression is entirely my own; you may take it down and use it freely. Two thousand years of remains is what we've got before us in Rome, and pretty well scattered too—nothing like the convenience of Pisa. I expect we shall have to allow at least four days for it. That Piazza del Duomo," continued poppa,

thoughtfully, "seems to have been laid out with a view to the American tourist of the future. But I don't suppose that kind of forethought is common."

"How exquisite it was, that cluster of white marble relics of the past on the bosom of dusky Pisa. It reminded me," said momma, poetically, "of an old maid's pearls."

"I should suggest," said the Senator to me, "that you make a note of that. A little sentiment won't do us any harm—just a little. And they *are* like an old maid's pearls in connection with that middle-aged, one-horse little city. Or I should say a widow's—Pisa was once a bride of the sea. A grass widow's," improved the Senator. "It's all meadow-land round there—did you notice?"

"I did not," I said coldly; "but, of course, if I'm to call Pisa a grass widow, it will have to be. Although I warn you, poppa, that in case of any critic being able to arise and indicate that it is laid out in oyster beds, I shall make it plain that the responsibility is yours."

We were speeding through Tuscany, and the vine-garlanded trees in the orchards clasped hands and danced along with us. The sky would have told us we were in Italy if we had come on a magic carpet without a compass or a time-table. Poppa says we are not, under any circumstances, to mention it more than once, but that we might as well explode the fallacy that there is anything like it in America. There isn't. Our cerulean is very beautifully blue, but in Italy one discovers

by contrast that it is an intellectual blue, filled with light, high, provocative. The sky that bends over Tuscany is the very soul of blue, deep, soft, intense, impenetrable—the sky that one sees in those little casual bits of landscape behind the shoulders of pre-Raphaelite Saints and Madonnas; and here and there a lake, giving it back with delight, and now and then the long slope of a hill, with an old yellow-walled town creeping up, castle crowned, and raggedly trimmed with olives; and so many ruins that the Senator, summoned by momma to look at the last in view, regarded it with disparagement, which he did not attempt to conceal. He wondered, he said, that the Italian Government wasn't ashamed of having such a lot of them. They might be picturesque, but they weren't creditable; they gave you the impression that the country was on the down grade. "You needn't call my attention to any more of them, Augusta," he added; "but if you see any building that looks like progress, now, anything that gives you the idea of modern improvements inside, I shouldn't like to miss it." And he returned to the thirty-second page of the Sunday *New York World.*

"I sometimes wish," said momma, "that I were not the only person in this family with the artistic temperament."

Sometimes we stopped at the little yellow towns and saw quite closely their queer old defences and belfrys and clock towers, and guessed at the pomegranates and oleanders behind their high courtyard walls. They had

musical names, even in the mouths of the railway guards, who sang every one of them with a high note and a full octave on the syllable of stress—"Rosign*a*no!" "Car*m*iglia!" The Senator was fascinated with the spectacle of a railway guard who could express himself intelligibly, to say nothing of the charm; he spoke of introducing the system in the United States, but we tried it on "New York," "Washington," "Kansas City," and it didn't seem the same.

It was at Orbatello, I think, that we made the travelling acquaintance of the enterprising little gentleman to whom momma still mysteriously alludes as "il capitano." He bowed ceremoniously as he entered the carriage and stowed the inevitable enormous valise in the rack, and his eye brightened intelligently as he saw we were a family of American tourists. He wore a rather seamy black uniform and a soft felt hat with cocks' feathers drooping over it, and a sword and a ridiculously amiable expression for a man. I don't think he was five feet high, but his moustache and his feathers and his sword were out of all proportion. There was a gentle trustful exuberance about him which suggested that, although it was possibly twenty-five years since he was born, his age was much less than that. He twirled his moustache in voluble silence for ten minutes while we all furtively scrutinised him with the curiosity inspired by a foreigner of any size, and then with a smile of conscious sweetness he asked the Senator if he might take the liberty to give the trouble to see the English news-

paper for a few seconds only. "I should be too thankful," he added.

"Why certainly," said poppa, much gratified. "I see you spikkum English," he added encouragingly.

"I speak—um, *si*. I have learned some—a few of them. But O very baddili I speak them!"

"I guess that's just your modesty," said poppa kindly. "But that's not an English paper, you know—it's published in New York."

"Ah!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm. "That will be much *much* the more pleasurable for me." His eyes shone with feeling. "In Italy," he added with an impulsive gesture, "we love the American peoples beyond the Londonian. We always remember that it was an Italian, Cristoforo Col——"

"I know," said poppa. "Very nice of you. But what's your reason now, for preferring Americans as a nation?"

We saw our first Italian shrug. It is more prolonged, more sentimental than French ones. In this case it expressed the direct responsibility of Fate.

"I think," he said, "that they are more *simpatica*—sympatheticated to us." He seemed to be unaware of me, but his eye rested upon momma at this point, and took her into his confidence.

"We also," said she reciprocally, "are always charmed to see Italians in our country."

I wondered privately whether she was thinking of hand organ men or members of the Mafia society, but

it was no opportunity to inquire. My impression is that about this time, in spite of Tuscany outside, I went to sleep, because my next recollection is of the little Captain pouring Chianti out of a large black bottle into momma's jointed silver travelling cup. I remember thinking when I saw that, that they must have made progress. Scraps of conversation floated through my waking moments when the train stopped—I heard momma ask him if his parents were both living and where his home was. I also understood her to inquire whether the Italians were domestic in their tastes or whether they were like the French, who, she believed, had no home life at all. I saw the Senator put a card in his pocket-book and restore it to his breast, and heard him inquire whether his new Italian acquaintance wore his uniform every day as a matter of choice or because he had to. An hour went by, and when I finally awoke it was to see momma sitting by with folded hands and an expression of much gratification while poppa gave a graphic account of the rise and progress of the American baking-powder interest. "I don't expect," said he, "you've ever heard of Wick's Electric Corn-flour?"

"It is my misfortune."

"We sent thousands of cans to Southern Europe last year, sir. Or Wick's Sublimated Soda?"

"I am stupidissimo."

"No, not at all. But I daresay your momma knows it, if she ever has waffles on her breakfast table. Well, it's been a kind of kitchen revolution. We began by

making a hundred pounds a week—and couldn't always get rid of it. Now—why the day before I sailed we sent six thousand cans to the Queen of Madagascar. I hope she'll read the instructions!"

"It takes the breath. What splendid revenue must be from that!"

The Senator merely smiled, and played with his watch chain. "I should hate to brag," he said, but anyone could see from the absence of a diamond ring on his little finger that he was a person of weight in his community.

"Oh!" said momma, "my daughter is awake at last! Mamie, let me introduce Count Filgiatti. Count, my daughter. What a pity you went to sleep, love. The Count has been giving us *such* a delightful afternoon."

The carriage swayed a good deal as the Count stood up to bow, but that had no effect either upon the dignity or the gratification he expressed. His pleasure was quite ingratiating, or would have been if he had been a little taller. As it was, it was amusing, and I recognised an opportunity for the study of Italian character. I don't mean that I made up my mind to avail myself of it, but I saw that the opportunity was there.

"So you've been reading the *New York World*," I said kindly.

"I have read, yes, two *avertissimi*. Not more, I fear. But they are also amusing, the *avertissimi*." His voice was certainly agreeably deferential, with a note of gratitude.

"Now, if you wouldn't mind taking the corner opposite my daughter, Count Filgiatti," put in poppa, "you and she could talk more comfortably, and Mrs. Wick could put her feet up and get a little nap."

"I am too happy if I shall not be a trouble to Mees," the Count responded, beaming. And I said, "Dear me, no; how could he?" at which he very obligingly changed his seat.

I hardly know how we drifted into abstract topics. The Count's English was so bad that my sense of humour should have confined him to the weather and the scenery; but it is nevertheless true that about an hour later, while the landscape turned itself into a soft, warm chromo in the fading sunset, and both my parents soundly slept, we were discussing the barrier of religion to marriage between Protestants and Roman Catholics. I did not hesitate to express the most liberal sentiments.

"Since there are to be no marriages in heaven," I said, "what difference can it make, in married life, how people get there?"

"The signor and signora think also so?"

"Oh, I daresay poppa and momma have got their own opinions," I said, "but that is mine."

"You do not think as they!" he exclaimed.

"I don't know what they think," I explained. "I haven't asked them. But I've got my own thinker, you know." I searched for simple expressions, and I seemed to make him understand.

"So! Then this prejudice is dead for you, Senorita —*mees?*"

"I like 'Senorita' best," I said. "I believe it is." At that moment I divined that he was a Roman Catholic. How, I don't know. So I added, "But I've never had the slightest reason to give it a thought."

"That must be," he said softly, "because you never met, Senorita—may I say this?—one single gentleman w'at is Catholic."

"That's rather clever of you," I said. "Perhaps that *is* why."

The Italian character struck me as having interesting phases, but I did not allow this impression to appear. I looked indifferently out of the window. Italian sunsets are very becoming.

"The signora, your mother, has told me that you have no brothers or sisters, Mees Wick. She made me the confidence—it was most kind."

"There never has been any secret about it, Count."

"Then you have not even one?" Count Filgiatti's eyes were full of melancholy sympathy.

"I think," I said with coldness, "that in a matter of that kind, momma's word should hardly need corroboration."

"Ah, it is sad! With me what difference! Can you believe of eleven? And the father with the saints! And I of course am the eldest of all."

"Dear me," I said, "what a responsibility!"

"Ah, you recognise! you understand the—the necessities, yes?"

At that moment the train stopped at Civita Vecchia, and the Senator awoke and put his hat on. "The Eternal City," he remarked when he descried that the name of the station was not Rome, "appears to have an eternal railway to match. There seems to be a feeding counter here though—we might have another try at those slices of veal boiled in tomatoes and smothered with macaroni that they give the pilgrim stranger in these parts. You may lead the world in romance, Count, but you don't put any of it in your railway refreshments."

As we passed out into the smooth-toned talkative darkness, Count Filgiatti said in my ear, "Mistra and Madame Wick have kindly consented to receive my visit at the hotel to-morrow. Is it agreeable to you also that I come?"

And I said, "Why, certainly!"

CHAPTER XI.

We descended next morning to realise how original we were in being in the plains of Italy in July. The Fulda people and the Miss Binghams and Mrs. Portheris had prevented our noticing it before, but in the Hotel Mascigni, Via del Tritone, we seemed to have arrived at a point of arid solitude, which gave poppa a new and convincing sense of all he was going through in pursuit of Continental culture. We sat in one corner of the "Sala di mangiari" at a small square table, and in all the length and breadth and sumptuousness of that magnificent apartment—Italian hotel dining-rooms are always florid and palatial—there was only one other little square table with a cloth on it and an appearance of expectancy. The rest were heaped with chairs, bottom side up, with their legs in the air; the chandeliers were tied up in brown holland, and through a depressed and exhausted atmosphere, suggestive of magnificent occasions temporarily in eclipse, moved, with a casual languid air, a very tall waiter and a very short one. At mysterious exits to the rear occasionally appeared the form of the *chef* exchanging plates. It was borne in upon one that in the season the *chef* would be remanded to the most inviolable seclusion.

"Do you suppose Pompeii will be any worse than this?" inquired the Senator.

"Talk about Americans pervading the Continent," he continued, casting his eye over the surrounding desolation. "Where are they? I should be glad to see them. Great Scott! if it comes to that, I should be glad to see a blooming Englishman!"

It wasn't an answer to prayer, for there had been no opportunity for devotion, but at that moment the door opened and admitted Mr., Mrs., and Miss Emmeline Malt, and Miss Callis. The reunion was as rapt as the Senator and Emmeline could make it, and cordial in every other respect. Mr. Malt explained that they had come straight through from Paris, as time was beginning to press.

"We couldn't leave out Rome," he said, "on account of Mis' Malt's mother—she made such a point of our seeing the prison of Saint Paul. In her last letter she was looking forward very anxiously to our safe return to get an account of it. She's a leader in our experience meetings, and I couldn't somehow make up my mind to face her without it."

"Poppa," remarked Emmeline, "is not so foolish as he looks."

"We were just wondering," exclaimed momma, "who that table was laid for. But we never thought of *you*. Isn't it strange?"

We agreed that it was little short of marvellous. The tall waiter strolled up for the commands of the

Malt party. His demeanour showed that he resented the Malts, who were, nevertheless, innocent respectable people. As Emmeline ordered "*café au lait pour tous*," he scowled and made curious contortions with his lower jaw. "Anything else you want?" he inquired, with obvious annoyance.

"Yes," said Miss Callis. He further expressed his contempt by twisting his moustache, and waited in silent disdain.

"I want," said Miss Callis sweetly, leaning forward with her chin artlessly poised in her hand, "to know if you are paid to make faces at the guests of this hotel."

There was laughter, above which Emmeline's crow rose loud and clear, and as the waiter hastened away, suddenly transformed into a sycophant, poppa remarked, "I see you've got those hotel tickets, too. Let me give you a little pointer. Say nothing about it until next day. They are like that sometimes. In being deprived of the opportunity of swindling us, they feel that they've been done themselves."

"Oh," said Mr. Malt, "we never reveal it for twenty-four hours. That fellow must have smelled 'em on us. Now, how were you proposing to spend the day?"

"We're going to the Forum," remarked Emmeline. "Do come with us, Mr. Wick. We should love to have you."

"We mustn't forget the Count," said momma to the Senator.



"Are you paid to make faces?"

"What Count?" Emmeline inquired. "Did you ever, momma! Mis' Wick knows a count. She's been smarter than we have, hasn't she? Introduce him to us, Mis' Wick."

"Emmeline," said her mother severely, "you are as personal as ever you can be. I don't know whatever Mis' Wick will think of you."

"She's merely full of intelligent curiosity, Mis' Malt," said Mr. Malt, who seemed to be in the last stage of infatuated parent. "I know you'll excuse her," he added to momma, who said with rather frigid emphasis, "Oh yes, we'll excuse her." But the hint was lost and Emmeline remained. Poppa looked in his memorandum book and found that the Count was not to arrive until 3 P. M. There was, therefore, no reason why we should not accompany the Malts to the Forum, and it was arranged.

A quarter of an hour later we were rolling through Rome. As a family we were rather subdued by the idea that it was Rome, there was such immense significance even in the streets with tramways, though it was rather an atmosphere than anything of definite detail; but no such impression weighed upon the Malts. They took Rome at its face value and refused to recognise the unearned increment heaped up by the centuries. However, as we were divided in two carriages, none of us had all the Malts.

It was warm and dusty, the air had a malarious taste. We drove first, I remember, to the American

druggist's in the Piazza di Spagna for some magnesia Mrs. Malt wanted for Emmeline, who had prickly heat. It was annoying to have one's first Roman impressions confused with Emmeline and magnesia and prickly heat; but Mrs. Malt appeared to think that Rome attracted visitors chiefly by means of that American druggist. She said she was perfectly certain we should find an American dentist there, too, if we only took the time to look him up. I can't say whether she took the time. We didn't.

It was interesting, the Piazza di Spagna, because that is where everybody who has read "Roba di Roma" knows that the English and Americans have lived ever since the days when dear old Mr. Story and the rest used to coach it from Civita Vecchia—in hotels, and pensions, and apartments, the people in Marion Crawford's novels. We could only decide that the plain, severe, many-storied houses with the shops underneath had charms inside to compensate for their outward lack. Not a tree anywhere, not a scrap of grass, only the lava pavement, and the view of the druggist's shop and the tourists' agency office. Miss Callis said she didn't see why man should be for ever bound up with the vegetable creation—it was like living in a perpetual salad—and was disposed to defend the Piazza di Spagna at all points, it looked so nice and expensive. But Miss Callis's tastes were very distinctly urban.

That druggist's establishment was on the Pincian Hill! It seemed, on reflection, an outrage. We all

looked about us, when we discovered this, for the other six, and another of the foolish geographical illusions of the school-room was shattered for each of us. The Rome of my imagination was as distinctly seven-hilled as a quadruped is four-legged, the Rome I saw had no eminences to speak of anywhere. Perhaps, as poppa suggested, business had moved away from the hills and we should find them in the suburbs, but this we were obliged to leave unascertained.

Through the warm empty streets we drove and looked at Rome. It was driving through time, through history, through art, and going backward. And through the Christian religion, for we started where the pillar of Pius IX., setting forth the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, reaffirmed a modern dogma of the great church across the Tiber; and we rattled on past other and earlier memorials of that church thick-built into the Middle Ages, and of the Early Fathers, and of the very Apostles. All heaped and crowded and over-built, solid and ragged, decaying and defying decay, clinging to her traditions with both hands, old Rome jostled before us. Presently uprose a great and crumbling arch and a difference, and as we passed it the sound of the life of the city died indistinctly away and a silence grew up, with the smell of the sun upon grasses and weeds, and we stopped and looked down into Cæsar's world, which lay below us, empty. We gazed in silence for a moment, and then Emmeline remarked that she could make as good a Forum with a box of blocks.

"I shouldn't wonder but what you express the sentiments of all present," said her father admiringly. "Now is it allowable for us to go down there and make ourselves at home amongst those antique pillars, or have we got to take the show in from here?"

"No, Malt," said the Senator, helping the ladies out, "I can't say I agree with you. It's a dead city, that's what it is, and for my part I've never seen anything so impressive."

"Mr. Wick," remarked Miss Callis, "has not visited Philadelphia."

"Well, for a municipal cemetery," returned Mr. Malt, "it's pretty uncared for. If there was any enterprise in this capital it would be suitably railed in with posts and chains, and a monument inscribed 'Here lies Rome's former greatness" or something like that. But the Italians haven't got a particle of go—I've noticed that all through."

We went down the wooden stair, a century at a step, and presently walked and talked, we seven Americans, in that elder Rome that most people know so much better than the one with St. Peter's and the Corso, because of the clinging nature of those early impressions which we construe for ourselves with painful reference to lists of exceptions. We all felt that it was a small place to have had so much to say to history, and were obliged to remind ourselves that we weren't looking at the whole of it. Poppa acknowledged that his tendency to compare it unfavourably, in spite of the verdict of his-

tory, with Chicago was checked by a smell from the Cloaca Maxima, which proved that the Ancient Romans probably enjoyed enteric and sewer gas quite as much as we do, although under names that are to be found only in dictionaries now. Mrs. Malt said the place surprised her in being so yellow—she had always imagined pictures of it to have been taken in the sunset, but now she saw that it was perfectly natural. Acting upon Mr. Malt's advice, we did not attempt to identify more than the leading features, and I remember distinctly, in consequence, that the temple of Castor had three columns standing and the temple of Saturn had eight, while of the Basilica Julia there was nothing at all but the places where they used to be. Mrs. Malt said it made her feel quite idolatrous to look at them, and for her part she couldn't be sorry they had fallen so much into decay —it was only right and proper. This launched Mr. and Mrs. Malt and my parents upon a discussion which threatened to become unwisely polemic if Emmeline had not briefly decided it in favour of Christianity.

Momma and Mrs. Malt expressed a desire above all things to see the temple and apartments of the Vestal Virgins, which Miss Callis with some surprise begged them on no account to mention in the presence of the gentlemen.

"There are some things," remarked Miss Callis austerely, "from which no respectable married lady would wish to lift the veil of the classics."

Momma was inclined to argue the point, but Miss Callis looked so shocked that she desisted.

"Perhaps, Mrs. Wick," she said sarcastically, "you intend to go to see the Baths of Caracallus!"

To which momma replied certainly *not*, that was a very different thing. And if I am unable to describe the Baths of Caracallus in this history, it is on account of Miss Callis's personal influence and the remarkable development of her sense of propriety.

At momma's suggestion we walked slowly all round the Via Sacra, looking steadily down at its little triangular original paving-stones, and tried to imagine ourselves the shackled captives of Scipio. If the party had not consisted so largely of Emmeline the effort might have been successful. Fragments of exhumed statuary, discoloured and featureless, stood tipped in rows along the shorn foundations and inspired in Mr. Malt a serious curiosity.

"The ancients," said Mr. Malt with conviction, "were every bit as smart as the moderns, meaning born intelligence. Look at that ear—that ear took talent. There isn't a terra-cotta factory in the United States that could turn out a better ear to-day. But they hadn't what we call gumption, they put all their capital into one line of business, and you may be sure they swamped the market. If they'd just done a little inventing now, instead—worried out the idea of steam, or gas, or electricity—why Rome might never have fallen to this day." And no one interfered with Mr. Malt's idea that the

fall of Rome was a purely commercial disaster. Doubtless it was out of regard for his feelings, but he was exactly the sort of man to compel you to prove your assertion.

We found the boundaries of the first Forum of the Republic, and poppa, pacing it in a soft felt hat and a silk duster, offered a Senatorial contrast to history. He looked round him with dignity and made the gesture which goes with his most sustained oratorical flights. "I wouldn't have backed up Cato in everything," he said thoughtfully. "No. There were occasions on which I should have voted against the old man, and the little American school-boys of to-day would have had to decline 'Mugwumpus' in consequence." And at the thought of Cannæ and Trasimene the nineteenth century Senator from Illinois fiercely pulled his beard.

We turned our pilgrim feet to where the Colosseum wheels against the sky and gives up the world's eternal supreme note of splendour and of cruelty; and along the solitary dusty Appian Way, as if it were a country lane of the time we know, came a ragged Roman urchin with a basket. Under the triumphal arch of Titus, where his forefathers jeered at the Jews in manacled procession, we bargained with him for his purple plums. He had the eyes and the smile of immemorial Italy for his own, and the bones of Imperial Rome in equal inheritance, which he also wished to sell, by the way, in jagged fragments from his trouser pockets. And it linked up those

early days with that particular afternoon in a curiously simple way to think that from the Cæsars to King Humbert there has never been a year without just such brown-cheeked, dark-eyed, imperfectly washed little Roman boys upon the Appian Way.

CHAPTER XII.

We were too late for the hotel *déjeuner*, and had to order it, I remember, *à la carte*. That was why the Count was kept waiting. We were kept waiting, too, which seemed at the moment of more importance, since the atmosphere of the classics had given us excellent appetites. Emmeline decided upon ices and *petits fours* in the Corso for her party, after which they were going to let nothing interfere with their inspection of the prison of St. Paul; but we came back and ordered a haricot. In the cavernous recesses beyond the door which opened kitchen-ward, commands resounded, and a quarter of an hour later a boy walked casually through the dining-room bearing beans in a basket. Time went on, and the Senator was compelled to send word that he had not ordered the repast for the following day. The small waiter then made a pretence of activity, and brought vinegar and salt, and rolls and water. "The peutates is notta-cooks," said he in deprecation, and we were distressed to postpone the Count for those peutates. But what else was possible?

The dismaying part was that after luncheon had enabled us to regard a little thing like that with equa-

nimity, my parents abandoned it to me. Momma said she knew she was missing a great deal, but she really didn't feel equal to entertaining the Count; her back had given out completely. The Senator wished to attend to his mail. With the assistance of his letters and telegrams he was beginning to bear up wonderfully, and, as it was just in, I hadn't the heart to interfere. "You can apologise for us, daughter," said poppa, "and say something polite about our seeing him later. Don't let him suppose we've gone back on him in any way. It's a thing no young fellow in America would think of, but with these foreigners you never can tell."

I saw at once that the Count was annoyed. He was standing in the middle of the salon, fingering his sword-hilt in a manner which expressed the most absurd irritation. So I said immediately that I was awfully sorry, but it seemed so difficult to get anything to eat in Rome at that time of year, that the head-waiter was really responsible, and wouldn't he sit down?

"I don't know what you will think of us," I went on as we shook hands. "How long have you been kind enough to wait, anyway?"

"Since a quarter of an hour—only," replied the Count, with a difficult smile, "but now that I see you it is forgotten all."

"That's very nice of you," I said. "I assure you momma was quite worked up about keeping you waiting. It's rather trying to the American temperament to

be obliged to order a hurried luncheon from the market-gardener."

"So! In America you have him not—the market garden? You are each his own vegetable. Yes? Ah, how much better than the poor Italian! But Mistra and Madame Wick, they have not, I hope, the indisposition?"

"Well, I'm afraid they have, Count—something like that. They said I was to ask you to excuse them. You see they've been sight-seeing the whole morning, and that's something that can't be done by halves in your city. The stranger has to put his whole soul into it, hasn't he?"

"Ah, the whole soul! It is too fatiguing," Count Filgiatti assented. He glanced at me uncertainly, and rose. "Kindly may I ask that you give my deepest afflictions to Mistra and Madame Wick for their health?"

"Oh," I said, "if you *must!* But I'm here, you know." I put no hauteur into my tone, because I saw that it was a misunderstanding.

He still hesitated and I remembered that the Filgiatti intelligence probably dated from the Middle Ages, and had undergone very little alteration since. "You have made such a short visit," I said. "I must be a very bad substitute for momma and poppa."

A flash of comprehension illuminated my visitor's countenance. "I pray that you do not think such a

wrong thing," he said impulsively. "If it is permitted, I again sit down."

"Do," said I, and he did. Anything else would have seemed perfectly unreasonable, and yet for the moment he twisted his moustache, apparently in the most foolish embarrassment. To put him at his ease, I told him how lovely I thought the fountains. "That's one of your most ideal connections with ancient history, don't you think?" I said. "The fact that those old aqueducts of yours have been bringing down the water to sparkle and ripple in Roman streets ever since."

"Idealissimo! And the Trevi of Bernini—I hope you threw the soldi, so that you must come back to Rome!"

"We weren't quite sure which it was," I responded, "so poppa threw soldi into all of them, to make certain. Sometimes he had to make two or three shots," and I could not help smiling at the recollection.

"Ah, the profusion!"

"I don't suppose they came to a quarter of a dollar, Count. It is the cheapest of your amusements."

The Count reflected for a moment.

"Then you wish to return to Rome," he said softly; "you take interest here?"

"Why yes," I said, "I'm not a barbarian. I'm from Illinois."

"Then why do you go away?"

"Our time is so limited."

"Ah, Mees Wick, you have all of your life." The Italians certainly have exquisite voices.

"That is true," I said thoughtfully.

"Many young American ladies now live always in Italy," pursued Count Filgiatti.

"Is that so?" I replied pleasantly. "They are domiciled here with their parents?"

"Y—yes. Sometimes it is like that. And sometimes——"

"Sometimes they are working in the studios. I know. A delightful life it must be."

The Count looked at the carpet. "Ah, signorina, you misunderstand my poor English," he said; "she means quite different."

It was not coquetry which induced me to cast down my eyes.

"The American young lady will sometimes contract alliance."

"Oh!" I exclaimed.

"Yes. And if it is a good arrangimento it is always quite *quite* happy."

"We are said," I observed thoughtfully, "to be able, as a people, to accommodate ourselves to circumstances."

"You approve this idea! Signorina, you are so amiable, it is heavenly."

"I see no objection to it," I said. "It is entirely a matter of taste."

"And the American ladies have much taste," observed Count Filgiatti blandly.

"I'm afraid it isn't infallible," I said, "but it is charming to hear it approved."

"The American lady comes in Italy. She is young, beautiful, with a grace—ah! And perhaps there is a little income—a few dollar—but we do not speak of that—it is a trifle, only to make possible the arrangimento."

"I see," I said.

"The American lady is so perceiving—it is also a charm. The Italian gentleman has a dignity of his. He is perhaps from a family a little old. It is nothing—the matter is of the heart—but it makes possible the arrangimento."

"I have read of such things before," I said, "in the newspapers. It is most amusing to hear them corroborated on the spot. But that is one of the charms of travel, Count Filgiatti."

The Count hesitated and a shade of indecision crossed his swarthy little features. Then he added simply, "For me she has always been a vision, that American lady. It is for this that I study the English. I have thought, 'When I meet one of those so charming Americans, I will do my possible.'"

I could not help thinking of that family of eleven and the father with the saints. It was pathetic to feel one's self a realised vision without any capacity for beneficence—worse in some respects than being obliged

to be unkind to hopes with no financial basis. It made one feel somehow so mercenary. But before I could think of anything to say—it was such a difficult juncture—the Count went on.

"But in the Italian idea it is better first one thing to know—the agreement of the American signorina. If she will not, the Italian nobleman is too much disgrace. It is not good to offer the name and the title if the lady say no, I do not want—take that poor thing away."

How artless it was! Yet my sympathy ebbed immediately. Not my curiosity, however. Perhaps at this or an earlier point I should have gone blushing away and forever pondered in secret the problem of Count Filgiatti's intentions. I confess that it didn't even occur to me—it was such a little Count and so far beyond the range of my emotions. Instead, I smiled in a non-committal way and said that Count Filgiatti's prudence was most unique.

"With a friend to previously discover then it is easy. But perhaps the lady will have no friends in Italy."

"You would have to be prepared for that," I said. "Certainly."

"Also she perhaps quickly go away. The Americans are so instantaneous. Maybe my vision fade like —like anything."

"In a perspective of tourists' coupons," I suggested.

For a moment there was silence, through which we could hear the scrubbing-brush of the chambermaid on

the marble hall of the first floor. It seemed a final note of desolation.

"If I must speak of myself believe me it is not a nobody the Count Filgiatti," he went on at last. "Two Cardinals I have had in my family and one is second cousin to the Pope."

"Fancy the Pope's having relations!" I said, "but I suppose there is nothing to prevent it."

"Nothing at all. In my family I have had many ambassadors, but that was a little formerly. Once a Filgiatti married with a Medici—but these things are better for Mistra and Madame Wick to inquire."

"Poppa is very much interested in antiquities, but I'm afraid there will hardly be time, Count Filgiatti."

"Listen, I will say all! Always they have been much too large, the families Filgiatti. So now perhaps we are a little *re*duce. But there is still somethings—ah—signorina, can you pardon that I speak these things, but the time is so small—there is fifteen hundred lire yearly revenue to my pocket."

"About three hundred dollars," I observed sympathetically. Count Filgiatti nodded with the smile of a conscious capitalist. "Then of course," I said, "you won't marry for money." I'm afraid this was a little unkind, but I was quite sure the Count would perceive no irony, and said it for my own amusement.

"*Jamais!* In Italy you will find that never! The Italian gives always the heart before—before——"

"The arrangimento," I suggested softly.

"Indeed, yes. There is also the seat of the family."

"The seat of the family," I repeated. "Oh—the family seat. Of course, being a Count, you have a castle. They always go together. I had forgotten."

"A castle I cannot say, but for the country it is very well. It is not amusing there, in Tuscany. It is a little out of repairs. Twice a year I go to see my mother and all those brothers and sisters—it is enough! And the Countess, my mother, has said to me two hundred times, 'Marry with an Americaine, Nicco—it is my command.' 'Nicco,' she calls me—it is what you call jack-name."

The Count smiled deprecatingly, and looked at me with a great deal of sentiment, twisting his moustache. Another pause ensued. It's all very well to say I should have dismissed him long before this, but I should like to know on what grounds?

"I wish very much to write my mother that I have found the American lady for a new Countess Filgiatti," he said at last with emotion.

"Well," I said awkwardly, "I hope you will find her."

"Ah, Mees Wick," exclaimed the Count recklessly, "you are that American lady. When I saw you in the railway I said, 'It is my vision!' At once I desired to embrace the papa. And he was not cold with me—he told me of the soda. I had courage, I had hope.

At first when I see you to-day I am a little derange. In the Italian way I speak first with the papa. Then came a little thought in my heart—no, it is propitious! In America the daughter maka always her own arrangimento. So I am spoken."

At this I rose immediately. I would not have it on my conscience that I toyed with the matrimonial proposition of even an Italian Count.

"I think I understand you, Count Filgiatti," I said —There is something about the most insignificant proposal that makes one blush in a perfectly absurd way. I have never been able to get over it—" and I fear I must bring this interview to a close. I——"

"Ah, it is too embarrassing for you! It is experience very new, very strange."

"No," I said, regaining my composure, "not at all. But the fact is, Count Filgiatti, the transaction you propose doesn't appeal to me. It is too business-like to be sentimental, and too sentimental to be business-like. I'm sorry to seem disobliging, but I really couldn't make up my mind to marry a gentleman for his ancestors who are dead, even if he was willing to marry me for my income which may disappear. Poppa is very speculative. But I know there's a certain percentage of Americans who think a count with a family seat is about the only thing worth bringing away from Europe, now that we manufacture so much for ourselves, and if I meet any of them I'll bear you in mind."

"*Upon my word!*"

It was Mrs. Portheris, in the doorway behind us, just arrived from Siena.

. . . . . .

I mentioned the matter to my parents, thinking it might amuse them, and it did. From a business point of view, however, poppa could not help feeling a certain amount of sympathy for the Count. "I hope, daughter," he said, "you didn't give him the ha-ha to his face."

CHAPTER XIII.

There is the very tenderness of desolation upon the Appian Way. To me it suggested nothing of the splendour of Roman villas and the tragedy of flying Emperors. It spoke only of itself, lying over the wide silence of the noon-day fields, historic doubtless, but noon-day certainly. Something lives upon the warm stretches of the Appian Way, something that talks of the eternal and unchangeable, and yet has the pathos of the fragmentary and the lost. Perhaps it is the ghost of a genius that has failed of reincarnation, and inspires the weeds and the leaf-shadows instead. Thinking of it, one remembers only an almond tree in flower, that grew beside a ruined arch by the wayside—both quite alone in the sunlight—and perhaps of a meek, young, marble Cecilia, unquestioningly prostrate, submissive to the axe.

We were on our way to the Catacombs, momma, the Senator, and Mrs. Portheris in one carriage, R. Dod, Mr. Mafferton, Isabel, and I in the other. I approved of the arrangement, because the mutually distant understanding that existed between Mr. Mafferton and me had already been the subject of remark by my parents.

("For old London acquaintances you and Mr. Mafferton seem to have very little to say to each other," momma had observed that very morning.) It was borne in upon me that this was absurd. People have no business to be estranged for life because one of them has happened to propose to the other, unless, of course, he has been accepted and afterwards divorced, which is quite a different thing. Besides, there was Dicky to think of. I decided that there was a medium in all things, and to help me to find it I wore a blouse from Madame Valerie in the Rue de l'Opera, which cost seven times its value, and was naturally becoming. Perhaps this was going to extreme measures; but he was a recalcitrant Englishman, and for Dicky's sake one had to think of everything.

Englishmen have a genius for looking uncomfortable. Their feelings are terribly mixed up with their personal appearance. It was some time before Mr. Mafferton would consent to be even tolerably at his ease, though I made a distinct effort to show that I bore no malice. It must have been the mere memory of the past that embarrassed him, for the other two were as completely unaware of his existence as they well could be in the same carriage. For a time, as I talked in commonplaces, Mr. Mafferton in monosyllables, and Mr. Dod and Miss Portheris in regards, the most sordid realist would have hesitated to chronicle our conversation.

"When," I inquired casually, "are you thinking of going back, Mr. Mafferton?"

"To town? Not before October, I fancy!"

"Even in Rome," I observed, "London is 'town' to you, isn't it? What a curious thing insular tradition is!"

"I suppose Rome was invented first," he replied haughtily.

"Why yes," I said; "while the ancestors of Eaton-square were running about in blue paint and bear-skins, and Albert Gate, in the directory, was a mere cave. What do you suppose," I went on, following up this line of thought, "when you were untutored savages, was your substitute for the Red Book?"

"Really," said this Englishman, "I haven't an idea. Perhaps as you have suggested they had no ad*dresses*."

For a moment I felt quite depressed. "Did you think it was a conundrum?" I asked. "You so often remind me of *Punch*, Mr. Mafferton."

I shouldn't have liked anyone to say that to me, but it seemed to have quite a mollifying effect upon Mr. Mafferton. He smiled and pulled his moustache in the way Englishmen always do, when endeavouring to absorb a compliment.

"Dear old London," I went on reminiscently, "what a funny experience it was!"

"To the Transatlantic mind," responded Mr. Mafferton stiffly, "one can imagine it instructive."

"It was a revelation to mine," I said earnestly—"a revelation." Then, remembering Mr. Mafferton's somewhat painful connection with the revelation, I

added carefully, "From a historic point of view. The Tower, you know, and all that."

"Ah!" said Mr. Mafferton, with a distant eye upon the Campagna.

It was really very difficult.

"Do you remember the day we went to Madame Tussaud's?" I asked. Perhaps my intonation was a little dreamy. "I shall *never* forget William the Conqueror—never."

"Yes—yes, I think I do." It was clearly an effort of memory.

"And now," I said regretfully, "it can never be the same again."

"Certainly not." He used quite unnecessary emphasis.

"William and the others having been since destroyed by fire," I continued. Mr. Mafferton looked foolish. "What a terrible scene that must have been! Didn't you feel when all that royal wax melted as if the dynasties of England had been wrecked over again! What effect did it have on dear old Victoria?"

"One question at a time," said Mr. Mafferton, and I think he smiled.

"Now you remind me of Sandford and Merton," I said, "and a place for everything and everything in its place. And punctuality is the thief of time. And many others."

"You haven't got it *quite* right," said Mr. Maffer-

ton with incipient animation. "May I correct you? 'Procrastination,' not 'punctuality.'"

"Thanks," I said. I could not help observing that for quite five minutes Mr. Mafferton had made no effort to overhear the conversation between Mr. Dod and Miss Portheris. It was a trifle, but life is made up of little things.

"I don't believe we adorn our conversation with proverbs in America as much as we did," I continued. "I guess it takes too long. If you make use of a proverb you see, you've got to allow for reflection first, and reflection afterwards, and a sigh, and very few of us have time for that. It is one of our disadvantages."

Mr. Mafferton heard me with attention.

"Really!" he said in quite his old manner when we used to discuss Presidential elections and peanuts and other features of life in my republic. "That is a fact of some interest—but I see you cling to one little Americanism, Miss Wick. Do you remember"—he actually looked arch—"once assuring me that you intended to abandon the verb to 'guess'?"

"I don't know why we should leave all the good words to Shakespeare," I said, "but I was under a great many hallucinations about the American language in England, and I daresay I did."

If I responded coldly, it was at the thought of my last interview with poor dear Arthur, and his misprised larynx. But at this moment a wildly encouraging sign

from Dicky reminded me that his interests and not my own emotions were to be considered.

"We mustn't reproach each other, must we," I said softly. "*I* don't bear a particle of malice—really and truly."

Mr. Mafferton cast a glance of alarm at Mr. Dod and Miss Portheris, who were raptly exchanging views as to the respective merits of a cleek and a brassey shot given certain peculiar bunkers and a sandy green—as if two infatuated people talking golf would have ears for anything else!

"Not on any account," he said hurriedly.

"The best quality of friendship sometimes arises out of the most unfortunate circumstances," I added. The sympathy in my voice was for Dicky and Isabel.

Mr. Mafferton looked at me expressively and the carriage drew up at the Catacombs of St. Callistus. Mrs. Portheris was awaiting us by the gate, however, so in getting out I gave my hand to Dicky.

Inside and outside the gate, how quiet it was. Nothing on the Appian Way but dust and sunlight, nothing in the field within the walls but yellowing grass and here and there a field-daisy bending in the silence. It made one think of an old faded water-colour, washed in with tears, that clings to its significance though all its reality is gone. Then we saw a little bare house to the left with an open door, and inside found Brothers Demetrius and Eusebius in Trappist gowns and ropes, who would sell us beads for the profitable employment of our souls,

and chocolate and photographs, and wonderful eucalyptus liqueur from the Three Fountains, and when we had well bought would show us the city of the long, long dead of which they were custodians. They were both obliging enough to speak English, Brother Demetrius imperfectly and haltingly, and without the assistance of those four front teeth which are so especially necessary to a foreign tongue, Brother Eusebius fluently, and with such richness of dialect that we were not at all surprised to learn that he had served his Pope for some years in the State of New York.

"For de ladi de chocolate. Ith it not?" said Brother Demetrius, with an inducive smile. "It ith de betht in de worl', dis chocolate."

"Don't you believe him," said Brother Eusebius, "he's known as the oldest of the Roman frauds. Wants your money, that's what he wants." Brother Demetrius shook his fist in amicable, wagging protest. "That's the way he goes on, you know—quarrelsome old party. But I don't say it's bad chocolate. Try it, young lady, try it."

He handed a bit to Isabel, who looked at her momma.

"There is no possible objection, my dear," said Mrs. Portheris, and she nibbled it.

Dicky invested wildly.

"Dese photograff dey are very pritty," remarked Brother Demetrius to momma, who was turning over some St. Stephens and St. Cecilias.

"He'd say anything to sell them," put in Brother Eusebius. "He never thinks of his immortal soul, any more than if he was a poor miserable heretic. He'll tell you they're originals next, taken by Nero at the time. You're all good Catholics, of course?"

"We are not any kind of Catholics," said Mrs. Portheris severely.

"I'll give you my blessing all the same, and no extra charge. But the saints forbid that I should be selling beads made out of their precious bones to Protestants."

"I'll take that string," said momma.

"I wouldn't do it on any account," continued Brother Eusebius, as he wrapped them up in blue paper, but momma still attaches a certain amount of veneration to those beads.

"And what can I do for you, sir?" continued Brother Eusebius to the Senator, rubbing his hands. "What'll be the next thing?"

"The Early Christians," replied poppa laconically, "if it's all the same to you."

"Just in half a shake. Don't hurry yourselves. They'll keep, you know—they've kept a good long while already. Now you, madam," said Brother Eusebius to Mrs. Portheris, "have never had the influenza, I know. It only attacks people advanced in life."

"Indeed I have," replied that lady. "Twice."

"Is that so! Well, you never *would* have had it if you'd been protected with this liqueur of ours. It's

death and burial on influenza," and Brother Eusebius shook the bottle.

"I consider," said Mrs. Portheris solemnly, "that eucalyptus in another form saved my life. But I inhaled it."

"Tho," ventured Brother Demetrius, "tho did I. But the wine ith for internal drinking."

"Listen to him! *E*ternal drinking, that's what he means. You never saw such an old boy for the influenza—gets it every week or so. How many bottles, madam? Just a nip, after dinner, and you don't know how poetic it will make you feel into the bargain."

"One bottle," replied Mrs. Portheris, "the larger size, please. Anything with eucalyptus in it must be salutary. And as we are going underground, where it is bound to be damp, I think I'll have a little now."

"That's what I call English common-sense," exclaimed Brother Eusebius, getting out a glass. "Will nobody keep the lady company? It's Popish, but it's good."

Nobody would. Momma observed rather uncautiously that the smell of it was enough, at which Mrs. Portheris remarked, with some asperity, that she hoped Mrs. Wick would never be obliged to be indebted to the "smell." "It is quite excellent," she said, "*most* cordial. I really think, as a precaution, I'll take another glass."

"Isn't it pretty strong?" asked poppa.



We followed the monks.

"The influenza is stronger," replied Mrs. Portheris oracularly, and finished her second potation.

"And nothing," said Brother Eusebius sadly, "for the gentleman standing outside the door, who doesn't approve of encouraging the Roman Catholic Church in any respect whatever. Dear me! dear me! we do get some queer customers." At which Mr. Mafferton frowned portentously. But nothing seemed to have any effect on Brother Eusebius.

"There are such a lot of you, and you are sure to be so inquisitive, that we'll both go with you," said he, and took candles from a shelf. Not ordinary candles at all—coils of long, slender strips, with one end turned up to burn. At the sight of them momma shuddered and said she hadn't thought it would be dark, and took the Senator's arm as a precautionary measure. Then we followed the monks Eusebius and Demetrius, who wrapped shawls round their sloping shoulders and hurried across the grass towards the little brick entrance to the Catacombs, shading their candles from the wind that twisted their brown gowns round their legs, with all the anxiety to get it over shown by janitors of buildings of this world.

CHAPTER XIV.

At first through the square chambers of the early Popes and the narrow passages lined with empty cells, nearest to the world outside, we kept together, and it was mainly Eusebius who discoursed of the building of the Catacombs, which he informed us had a pagan beginning.

"But our blessed early bishops said, 'Why should the devil have all the accommodations?' and when once the Church got its foot in there wasn't much room for *him*. But a few pagans there are here to this day in better company than they ever kept above ground," remarked Brother Eusebius.

"Can you tell them apart?" asked Mr. Dod, "the Christians and the Pagans?"

"Yes," replied that holy man, "by the measurements of the jaw-bone. The Christians, you see, were always lecturing the other fellows, so their jaw-bones grew to an awful size. Some of 'em are simply parliamentary."

"Dat," said Brother Demetrius anxiously—as nobody had laughed—"ith a joke."

"I noticed the intention," said poppa. "It's down

in the guide-book that you've been 'absolved from the vow of silence'—is that correct?"

"Right you are," said Brother Eusebius. "What about it?"

"Oh, nothing—only it explains a good deal. I guess you enjoy it, don't you?"

But Brother Eusebius was bending over a cell in better preservation than most of them, and was illuminating with his candle the bones of the dweller in it. The light flickered on the skull of the Early Christian and the tonsure of the modern one and made comparisons. It also cut the darkness into solid blocks, and showed us broken bits of marble, faint stains of old frescoes, strange rough letters, and where it wavered furthest the uncertain lines of a graven cross.

"Here's one of the original inhabitants," remarked Eusebius. "He's been here all the time. I hope the ladies don't mind looking at him in his bones?"

"Thee, you can pick him up," said old Demetrius, handing a thigh-bone to momma, who shrank from the privilege. "It ith quite dry."

"It seems such a liberty," she said, "and he looks *so* incomplete without it. Do put it back."

"That's the way I feel," remarked Dicky, "but I don't believe he'd mind our looking at a toe-bone. Are his toe-bones all there?"

"No," replied Demetrius, "I have count another day and he ith nine only. Here ith a few."

"It is certainly a very solemn and unusual privi-

lege," remarked Mr. Mafferton, as the toe-bones went round, "to touch the mortal remnant of an Early Christian."

"That altogether depends," said the Senator, "upon what sort of an Early Christian he was. Maybe he was a saint of the first water, and maybe he was a pillar of the church that ran a building society. Or, maybe, he was only an average sort of Early Christian like you or me, in which case he must be very uncomfortable at the idea of inspiring so much respect. How are you going to tell?"

"The gentleman is right," said Brother Eusebius, and in considering poppa's theory in its relation to the doubtful character before them nobody noticed, except me, the petty larceny, by Richard Dod, of one Early Christian toe-bone. His expression, I am glad to say, made me think he had never stolen anything before; but you couldn't imagine a more promising beginning for a career of embezzlement. As we moved on I mentioned to him that the man who would steal the toe-bone of an Early Christian, who had only nine, was capable of most crimes, at which he assured me that he hadn't such a thing about him outside of his boots, which shows how one wrong step leads to another.

We fell presently into two parties—Dicky, Mrs. Portheris, and I holding to the skirts of Brother Demetrius. Brother Demetrius knew a great deal about the Latin inscriptions and the history of Pope Damasus and the chapel of the Bishops, and how they found the body of

St. Cecilia, after eight hundred years, fresh and perfect, and dressed in rich vestments embroidered in gold; but his way of imparting it seriously interfered with the value of his information, and we looked regretfully after the other party.

"Here we have de tomb of Anterus and Fabianus——"

"I think we should keep up with the rest," interrupted Mrs. Portheris.

"Oh, I too, I know all dese Catacomb—I will take you everywheres—and here, too, we have buried Entychianus."

"Where is Brother Eusebius taking the others?" asked Dicky.

"Now I tell you: he mith all de valuable ting, he is too fat and lazy; only joke, joke, joke. And here we has buried Epis—martyr. Epis he wath *martyr*."

The others, with their lights and voices, came into full view where four passages met in a cubicle. "Oh," cried Isabel, catching sight of us, "*do* come and see Jonah and the whale. It's too funny for anything."

"And where Damathuth found here the many good thainth he——"

"We would like to see Jonah," entreated Dicky.

"Well," said Brother Demetrius crossly, "you go thee him—you catch up. I will no more. You do not like my Englis' very well. You go with fat old jokefellow, and I return the houth. Bethide, it ith the day of my lumbago." And the venerable Demetrius,

with distinct temper, turned his back on us and waddled off.

We looked at each other in consternation.

"I'm afraid we've hurt his feelings," said Dicky.

"You must go after him, Mr. Dod, and apologize," commanded Mrs. Portheris.

"Do you suppose he knows the way out?" I asked.

"It *is* a shame," said Dicky. "I'll go and tell him we'd rather have him than Jonah any day."

Brother Demetrius was just turning a corner. Darkness encompassed him, lying thick between us. He looked, in the light of his candle, like something of Rembrandt's suspended for a moment before us. Dicky started after him, and, presently, Mrs. Portheris and I were regarding each other with more friendliness than I would have believed possible across our flaring dips in the silence of the Catacombs.

"Poor old gentleman," I said; "I hope Mr. Dod will overtake him."

"So do I, indeed," said Mrs. Portheris. "I fear we have been very inconsiderate. But young people are always so impatient," she added, and put the blame where it belonged.

I did not retaliate with so much as a reproachful glance. Even as a censor Mrs. Portheris was so eminently companionable at the moment. But as we waited for Dicky's return neither of us spoke again. It made too much noise. Minutes passed, I don't know how many, but enough for us to look cautiously round

to see if there was anything to sit on. There wasn't, so Mrs. Portheris took my arm. We were not people to lean on each other in the ordinary vicissitudes of life, and even under the circumstances I was aware that Mrs. Portheris was a great deal to support, but there was comfort in every pound of her. At last a faint light foreshadowed itself in the direction of Dicky's disappearance, and grew stronger, and was resolved into a candle and a young man, and Mr. Dod, very much paler than when he left, was with us again. Mrs. Portheris and I started apart as if scientifically impelled, and exclaimed simultaneously, "Where is Brother Demetrius?"

"Nowhere in this graveyard," said Dicky. "He's well upstairs by this time. Must have taken a short cut. I lost sight of him in about two seconds."

"That was very careless of you, Mr. Dod," said Mrs. Portheris, "very careless indeed. Now we have no option, I suppose, but to rejoin the others; and where are they?"

They were certainly not where they had been. Not a trace nor an echo—not a trace nor an echo—of anything, only parallelograms of darkness in every direction, and our little circle of light flickering on the tombs of Anterus, and Fabianus, and Entychianus, and Epis—martyr—and we three within it, looking at each other.

"If you don't mind," said Dicky, "I would rather not go after them. I think it's a waste of time. Per-

sonally I am quite contented to have rejoined you. At one time I thought I shouldn't be able to, and the idea was trying."

"We wouldn't *dream* of letting you go again," said Mrs. Portheris and I simultaneously. "But," continued Mrs. Portheris, "we will all go in search of the others. They can't be very far away. There is nothing so alarming as standing still."

We proceeded along the passage in the direction of our last glimpse of our friends and relatives, passing a number of most interesting inscriptions, which we felt we had not time to pause and decipher, and came presently to a divergence which none of us could remember. Half of the passage went down three steps, and turned off to the left under an arch, and the other half climbed two, and immediately lost itself in blackness of darkness. In our hesitation Dicky suddenly stooped to a trace of pink in the stone leading upward, and picked it up—three rose petals.

"That settles it," he exclaimed. "Isa—Miss Portheris was wearing a rose. I gave it to her myself."

"Did you, indeed," said Isabel's mamma coldly. "My dear child, how anxious she will be!"

"Oh, I should think not," I said hopefully. "I am sure she can trust Mr. Dod to take care of himself—and of us, too, for the matter of that."

"Mr. Dod!" exclaimed Mrs. Portheris with indignation. "My poor child's anxiety will be for her mother."

And we let it go at that. But Dicky put the rose petals in his pocket with the toe-bone, and hopefully remarked that there would be no difficulty about finding her now. I mentioned that I had parents also, at that moment, lost in the Catacombs, but he did not apologize.

The midnight of the place, as we walked on, seemed to deepen, and its silence to grow more profound. The tombs passed us in solemn grey ranges, one above the other—the long tombs of the grown-up people, and the shorter ones of the children, and the very little ones of the babies. The air held a concentrated dolor of funerals sixteen centuries old, and the four dim stone walls seemed to have crept closer together. "I think I will take your arm, Mr. Dod," said Mrs. Portheris, and "I think I will take your other arm, Mr. Dod," said I.

"Thank you," replied Dicky, "I should be glad of both of yours," which may look ambiguous now, but we quite understood it at the time. It made rather uncomfortable walking in places, but against that overwhelming majority of the dead it was comforting to feel ourselves a living unit. We stumbled on, taking only the most obvious turnings, and presently the passage widened into another little square chamber. "More bishops!" groaned Dicky, holding up his candle.

"Perhaps," I replied triumphantly, "but Jonah, anyway," and I pointed him out on the wall, in two shades of brown, a good deal faded, being precipitated into the jaws of a green whale with paws and horns and

a smile, also a curled body and a three-forked tail. The wicked deed had two accomplices only, who had apparently stopped rowing to do it. Underneath was a companion sketch of the restitution of Jonah, in perfect order, by the whale, which had, nevertheless, grown considerably stouter in the interval, while an amiable stranger reclined in an arbor, with his hand under his head, and looked on.

"As a child your intelligence promised well," said Dicky; "that *is* Jonah, though not of the Revised Version. I don't think Bible stories ought to be illustrated, do you, Mrs. Portheris? It has such a bad effect on the imagination."

"We can talk of that at another time, Mr. Dod. At present I wish to be restored to my daughter. Let us push on at once. And please explain how it is that we have had to walk so far to get to this place, which was only a few yards from where we were standing when Brother Demetrius left us!" Mrs. Portheris's words were commanding, but her tone was the tone of supplication.

"I'm afraid I can't," said Dicky, "but for that very reason I think we had better stay where we are. They are pretty sure to look for us here."

"I cannot possibly wait to be looked for. I must be restored to my daughter! You must make an effort, Mr. Dod. And, now that I think of it, I have left the key of our boxes in the drawer of the dressing-table, and the key of that is in it, and the housemaid has the

key of the room. It is absolutely necessary that I should go back to the hotel at once."

"My dear lady," said Dicky, "don't you realize that we are lost?"

"Lost! Impossible! *Shout*, Mr. Dod!"

Dicky shouted, and all the Early Christians answered him. There are said to be seven millions. Mrs. Portheris grasped his arm convulsively.

"Don't do that again," she said, "on any account. Let us go on!"

"Much better not," protested Dicky.

"On! on!" commanded Mrs. Portheris. There was no alternative. We put Dicky in the middle again, and cautiously stepped out. A round of blue paper under our chaperone's arm caught the eye of Mr. Dod. "What luck!" he exclaimed, "you have brought the liqueur with you, Mrs. Portheris. I think we'd better all have some, if you don't mind. I've been in warmer cemeteries."

As she undid the bottle, Mrs. Portheris declared that she already felt the preliminary ache of influenza. She exhorted us to copious draughts, but it was much too nasty for more than a sip, though warming to a degree.

"Better take very little at a time," Dicky suggested, but Mrs. Portheris reaffirmed her faith in the virtues of eucalyptus, and with such majesty as was compatible with the neck of the bottle, drank deeply. Then we stumbled on. Presently Mrs. Portheris yawned widely

twice, thrice, and again. "I beg your pardon," said she, "I don't seem able to help it."

"It's the example of these gaping sepulchres," Dicky replied. "Don't apologize."

The passages grew narrower and more complex, the tombs more irregular. We came to one that partly blocked the path, tilted against the main wall like a separate sarcophagus, though it was really part of the solid rock. Looking back, a wall seemed to have risen behind us; it was a distinctly perplexing moment, hard upon the nerves. The tomb was empty, except for a few bones that might have been anything huddled at the bottom, and Mrs. Portheris sat down on the lower end of it. "I really do not feel able to go any further," she said; "the ascent is so perpendicular."

I was going to protest that the place was as level as a street, but Dicky forestalled me. "Eucalyptus," he said soothingly, "often has that effect."

"We are lost," continued Mrs. Portheris lugubriously, "in the Catacombs. We may as well make up our minds to it. We came here this morning at ten o'clock, and I should think, I should think—thish mus' be minnight on the following day."

"My watch has run down," said Dicky, "but you are probably quite right, Mrs. Portheris."

"It is doubtful," Mrs. Portheris went on, pulling herself together, "whether we are ever found. There are nine hundred miles of Catacombs. Unless we become cannibals we are likely to die of starvation. If we

do become cannibals, Mr. Dod," she added, sternly endeavouring to look Dicky in the eye, "I hope you will remember what ish due to ladies."

"I will offer myself up gladly," said he, and I could not help reflecting upon the comfort of a third party with a sense of humour under the circumstances.

"Thass right," said Mrs. Portheris, nodding approvingly, and much oftener than was necessary. "Though there isn't much on you—you won't go very far." Then after a moment of gloomy reflection she blew out her candle, and, before I could prevent it, mine also. Dicky hastily put his out of reach.

"Three candles at once," she said virtuously, "in a room of this size! It is wicked extravagance, neither more nor less."

I assure you you would have laughed, even in the Catacombs, and Dicky and I mutually approached the borders of hysteria in our misplaced mirth. Mrs. Portheris smiled in unison somewhat foolishly, and we saw that slumber was overtaking her. Gradually and unconsciously she slipped down and back, and presently rested comfortably in the sepulchre of her selection, sound asleep.

"She is right in it," said Dicky, holding up his candle. "She's a lulu," he added disgustedly, "with her eucalyptus."

This was disrespectful, but consider the annoyance of losing a third of our forces against seven million Early

Christian ghosts. We sat down, Dicky and I, with our backs against the tomb of Mrs. Portheris, and when Dicky suggested that I might like him to hold my hand for a little while I made no objection whatever. We decided that the immediate prospect, though uncomfortable, was not alarming, that we had been wandering about for possibly an hour, judging by the dwindling of Dicky's candle, and that search must be made for us as soon as ever the others went above ground and heard from Brother Demetrius the tale of our abandonment. I said that if I knew anything about momma's capacity for underground walking, the other party would have gone up long ago, and that search for us was, therefore, in all likelihood, proceeding now, though perhaps it would be wiser, in case we might want them, to burn only one candle at a time. We had only to listen intently and we would hear the voices of the searchers. We did listen, but all that we heard was a faint far distant moan, which Dicky tried to make me believe was the wind in a ventilating shaft. We could also hear a prolonged thumping very close to us, but that we could each account for personally. And nothing more.

"Dicky," said I after a time, "if it weren't for the candle I believe I should be frightened."

"It's about the most parsimonious style of candle I've ever seen," replied Dicky, "but it would give a little more light if it were trimmed." And he opened his pocket-knife.

"Be very careful," I begged, and Dicky said "Rather!"

"Did you ever notice," he asked, "that you can touch flame all right if you are only quick enough? Now, see me take the top off that candle." If Dicky had a fault it was a tendency to boastfulness. He took the lighted wick between his thumb and his knife-blade, and skilfully scooped the top off. It blazed for two seconds on the edge of the blade—just long enough to show us that all the flame had come with it. Then it went out, and in the darkness at my side I heard a scuffling among waistcoat pockets, and a groan.

"No matches?" I asked in despair.

"Left 'em in my light overcoat pockets, Mamie. I'm a bigger ass than—than Mafferton."

"You are," I said with decision. "No Englishman goes *any*where without his light overcoat. What have you done with yours?"

"Left it in the carriage," replied Dick humbly.

"That shows," said I bitterly, "how little you have learned in England. Propriety in connection with you is evidently like water and a duck's back. An intelligent person would have acquired the light overcoat principle in three days, and never have gone out without it afterward."

"Oh, go on!" replied Dick fiercely. "Go on. I don't mind. I'm not so stuck on myself as I was. But if we've got to die together you might as well forgive

me. You'll have to do it at the last moment, you know."

"I suppose you have begun to review your past life," I said grimly, "and that's why you are using so much American slang."

Then, as Dicky was again holding my hands, I maintained a dignified silence. You cannot possibly quarrel with a person who is holding your hand, no matter how you feel.

"There's only one thing that consoles me in connection with those matches," Dicky mentioned after a time. "They were French ones."

"I don't know what that has to do with it," I said.

"That's because you don't smoke," Dicky replied. And I had not the heart to pursue the inquiry. Time went on, black and silent, as it had been doing down there for sixteen centuries. We stopped arguing about why they didn't come to look for us, each privately wondering if it was possible that we had strayed too ingeniously ever to be found. We talked of many things to try to keep up our spirits, the conviction of the *St. James's Gazette* that American young ladies live largely upon chewing-gum, and other topics far removed from our surroundings, but the effort was not altogether successful. Dicky had just permitted himself to make a reference to his mother in Chicago when a sound behind us made us both start violently, and then cheered us immensely—a snore from Mrs. Portheris within the tomb. It was not, happily, a single accidental snore,

but the forerunner of a regular series, and we hung upon them as they issued, comforted and supported. We were vaguely aware that we could have no better defence against disembodied Early Christians, when, in the course of an hour, Mrs. Portheris sat up suddenly among the bones of the original occupant and asked what time it was. We felt a pang of regret at losing it.

After the first moment or two that lady realized the situation completely. "I suppose," she said, "we have been down here about two days. I am quite faint with hunger. I have often read that candles, under these terrible circumstances, are sustaining. What a good thing we have got the candles."

Dicky squeezed my hand nervously, but our chaperone had slept off the eucalyptus and had no longer one cannibal thought.

"I don't think it is time for candles yet," he said reassuringly. "You have been asleep, you know, Mrs. Portheris."

"If you have eaten them already, I consider that you have taken an unfair advantage, a very unfair advantage."

"Here is mine!" exclaimed Dicky nobly. "I hope I can deny myself, Mrs. Portheris, to that extent."

"And mine," I echoed; "but really, Mrs. Portheris——"

Another pressure of Dicky's hand reminded me—I am ashamed to confess it—that if Mrs. Portheris was

bent upon the unnecessary consumption of Roman tallow there was nothing in her past treatment of either of us to induce us to prevent her. The dictates of humanity, I know, should have influenced us otherwise, in connection with tallow, but they seemed for the moment to have faded as completely out of our bosoms as they did out of the early Roman persecutors! It seemed to me that all my country's wrongs at the hands of Mrs. Portheris rose up and clamoured to be avenged, and Dicky told me afterward that he felt just the same way.

"Then I have done you an injustice," she continued; "I apologize, I am sure, and I find that I have my own candle, thank you. It is adhering to the side of my bonnet."

We were perfectly silent.

"Perhaps I ought to try and wait a little longer," Mrs. Portheris hesitated, "but I feel such a sinking, and I assure you I have fallen away. My garments are quite loose."

"Of course it depends," said Dicky scientifically, "upon the amount of carbon the system has in reserve. Personally I think I can hold out a little longer. I had an excellent breakfast this m——, the day we came here. But if I felt a sinking——"

"*Waugh!*" said Mrs. Portheris.

"Have you—have you *begun?*" I exclaimed in agony, while Dicky shook in silence.

"I have," replied Mrs. Portheris hurriedly; "where —where is the eucalyptus? Ah! I have it!"

"*Ben-en-euh!* It is nutritive, I am sure, but it requires a cordial."

The darkness for some reason seemed a little less black and the silence less oppressive.

"I have only eaten about three inches," remarked Mrs. Portheris presently. Dicky and I were incapable of conversation—"but I—but I cannot go on at present. It is really not nice."

"An overdone flavour, hasn't it?" asked Dicky, between gasps.

"Very much so! Horribly! But the eucalyptus will, I hope, enable me to extract some benefit from it. I think I'll lie down again." And we heard the sound of a cork restored to its bottle as Mrs. Portheris returned to the tomb. It was quite half an hour before she woke up, declaring that a whole night had passed and that she was more famished than ever. "But," she added, "I feel it impossible to go on with the candle. There is something about the wick——"

"I know," said Dicky sympathetically, "unless you are born in Greenland, you cannot really enjoy them. There is an alternative, Mrs. Portheris, but I didn't like to mention it——"

"I know," she replied, "shoe leather. I have read of that, too, and I think it would be an improvement. Have you got a pocket-knife, Mr. Dod?"

Dicky produced it without a pang and we heard the rapid sound of an unbuttoning shoe. "I had these

made to order at two guineas, in the Burlington Arcade," said Mrs. Portheris regretfully.

"Then," said Dicky gravely, groping to hand her the knife, "they will be of good kid, and probably tender."

"I hope so, indeed," said Mrs. Portheris; "we must all have some. "Will you—will you *carve*, Mr. Dod?"

I remembered with a pang how punctilious they were in England about asking gentlemen to perform this duty, and I received one more impression of the permanence of British ideas of propriety. But Dicky declined; said he couldn't undertake it—for a party, and that Mrs. Portheris must please help herself and never mind him, he would take anything there was, a little later, with great hospitality. However, she insisted, and my portion, I know, was a generous one, a slice off the ankle. Mrs. Portheris begged us to begin; she said it was so cheerless eating by one's self, and made her feel quite greedy.

"Really," she said, "it is much better than candle—a little difficult to masticate perhaps, but, if I do say it myself, quite a tolerable flavour. If I only hadn't used that abominable French polish this morning. What do *you* think, Mr. Dod?"

"I think," said Dicky, jumping suddenly to his feet, while my heart stood still with anticipation, "that if there's enough of that shoe left, you had better put it on again, for I hear people calling us," and then, mak-



Dicky shouted till the skeletons turned to listen.

ing a trumpet with his hands, Dicky shouted till all the Roman skeletons sufficiently intact turned to listen. But this time the answer came back from their descendants, running with a flash of lanterns.

. . . . . .

I will skip the scene of our reunion, because I am not good at matters which are moving, and we were all excessively moved. It is necessary to explain, however, that Brother Demetrius, when he went above ground, felt his lumbago so acutely that he retired to bed, and was therefore not visible when the others came up. As we had planned beforehand, the Senator decided to go on to the Jewish Catacombs, taking it for granted that we would follow, while Brother Eusebius, when he found Demetrius in bed, also took it for granted that we had gone on ahead. He did not inquire, he said, because the virtue of taciturnity being denied to them in the exercise of their business, they always diligently cultivated it in private. My own conviction was that they were not on speaking terms. Our friends and relatives, after looking at the Jewish Catacombs, had driven back to the hotel, and only began to feel anxious at tea time, as they knew the English refreshment-rooms were closed for the season, like everything else, and Isabel asserted with tears that if her mother was above ground she would not miss her tea. So they all drove back to the Catacombs, and effected our rescue after we had been immured for exactly seven hours. I wish to add, to the credit of Mr. Richard Dod, that he

has never yet breathed a syllable to anybody about the manner in which Mrs. Portheris sustained nature during our imprisonment, although he must often have been strongly tempted to do so. And neither have I—until now.

CHAPTER XV.

"The thing that struck me on our drive to the hotel," remarked momma, "was that Naples was almost entirely inhabited by the lower classes."

"That is very noticeable indeed," concurred Mr. Mafferton, who was also there for the first time. "The people of the place are no doubt in the country at this time of the year, but one would naturally expect to see more respectable persons about."

"Now you'll excuse me, Mafferton," said the Senator, "but that's just one of those places where I lose the trail of the English language as used by the original inventors. Where do you draw the line of distinction between people and persons?"

"It's a mere Briticism, poppa," I observed. Mr. Mafferton loathed being obliged to defend his native tongue at any point. That very morning the *modus vivendi* between us, that I had done so much for Dicky's sake to establish, had been been imperilled by my foolish determination to know why all Englishmen pronounced "white" "wite."

"I daresay," said poppa gloomily, "but I am not on to it and I don't suppose I ever shall be. What struck

me on the ride up through the city was the perambulating bath. Going round on wheels to be hired out, just the ordinary tin tub of commerce. The fellows were shouting something—'Who'll buy a wash!' I suppose. But that's the disadvantage of a foreign language; it leaves so much to the imagination."

"The goats were nice," I said, "so promiscuous. I saw one of them looking out of a window."

"And the dear little horses with bells round their necks," momma added, "and the tall yellow houses with the stucco dropping off, and especially the fruit shops and the flower stalls that make pictures down every narrow street. Such *masses* of colour!"

"We might have hit on a worse hotel," observed Mr. Mafferton. "Very tolerable soup, to-night."

"I can't say I noticed the soup," said the Senator. "Fact is, soup to me is just—soup. I presume there are different kinds, but beyond knowing most of them from gruel I don't pretend to be a connoisseur."

"What nonsense, Alexander!" said momma sternly.

"Some are saltier than others, Augusta, I admit. But what I was going on to say was that for clear monotony the dinner programmes ever since Paris have beaten the record. Bramley told me how it would be. Consommy, he said—that's soup—consommy, the whole enduring time. Fish *frité* or fried, roast beef *à l'Italienne* or mixed up with vegetables. Beans—well, just beans, and if you don't like 'em you can leave 'em, but that fourth course is never anything but beans. After

that you get a chicken cut up with lettuce, because if it was put on the table whole some disappointed investigator might find out there was nothing inside and file a complaint. Anything to support that unstuffed chicken? Nope. Finishing up with a compote of canned fruit, mostly California pears that want more cooking, and after that cheese, if you like cheese, and coffee charged extra. Thanks to Bramley, I can't say I didn't know what to expect, but that doesn't increase the variety any. Now in America—I understand you have been to America, sir?"

"I have travelled in the States to some extent," responded Mr. Mafferton.

"Seen Brooklyn Bridge and the Hudson, I presume. Had a look at Niagara Falls and a run out to Chicago, maybe. That was before I had the pleasure of meeting you. Get as far as the Yosemite? No? Well, you were there long enough anyhow to realise that our hotels are run on the free will system."

"I remember," said Mr. Mafferton. "All the luxuries of the coming season, printed on a card usually about a foot long. A great variety, and very difficult to understand. When I had finished trying to translate the morning paper, I used to attack the card. I found that it threw quite a light upon early American civilisation from the aboriginal side. 'Hominy,' 'Grits,' 'Buckwheats,' 'Cantelopes,' are some of the dishes I remember. 'Succotash,' too, and 'creamed squash,' but I think they occurred at dinner generally. I used to

summon the waiter, and when he came to take my orders I would ask him to derive those dishes. I had great difficulty after a time in summoning a waiter. But the plan gave me many interesting half hours. In the end I usually ordered a chop."

"I don't want to run down your politics," poppa said, "but that's what I call being too conservative. Augusta, if you have had enough of the Bay of Naples and the moon, I might remind you of the buried city of Pompeii, which is on for to-morrow. It's a good long way out, and you'll want all your powers of endurance. I'm going down to have a smoke, and a look at the humorous publications of Italy. There's no sort of sociability about these hotels, but the head *portier* knows a little English."

"I suppose I had better retire," momma admitted, "though I sometimes wish Mr. Wick wasn't so careful of my nervous system. Delicious scene, good-night." And she too left us.

We were sitting in a narrow balcony that seemed to jut out of a horn of the city's lovely crescent. Dicky and Isabel occupied chairs at a distance nicely calculated to necessitate a troublesome raising of the voice to communicate with them. Mrs. Portheris was still confined to her room with what was understood to be the constitutional shock of her experiences in the Catacombs. Dicky, in joyful privacy, assured me that nobody could recover from a combination of Roman tallow and French kid in less than a week,



We were sitting in a narrow balcony.

but I told him he did not know the British constitution.

The moon sailed high over Naples, and lighted the lapping curve of her perfect bay in the deepest, softest blue, and showed us some of the nearer houses of the city, sloping and shouldering and creeping down, that they were pink and yellow and parti-coloured, while the rest curved and glimmered round the water in all tender tones of white holding up a thousand lamps. And behind, curving too, the hills stood clear, with the grey phantom of Vesuvius in sharp familiar lines, sending up its stream of steady red, and now and then a leaping flame. It was a scene to wake the latent sentiment of even a British bosom. I thought I would stay a little longer.

"So you usually ordered a chop?" I said by way of resuming the conversation. "I hope the chops were tender."

(I have a vague recollection that my intonation was.)

"There are worse things in the States than the mutton," replied Mr. Mafferton, moving his chair to enable him, by twisting his neck not too ostentatiously, to glance occasionally at Dicky and Isabel, "but the steaks were distinctly better than the chops—distinctly."

"So all connoisseurs say," I replied respectfully. "Would you like to change seats with me? I don't mind sitting with my back to—Vesuvius."

Mr. Mafferton blushed—unless it was the glow from the volcano.

"Not on my account," he said. "By any means."

"You do not fear a demonstration," I suggested. "And yet the forces of nature are very uncertain. That is your English nerve. It deserves all that is said of it."

Mr. Mafferton looked at me suspiciously.

"I fancy you must be joking," he said.

He sometimes complained that the great bar to his observation of the American character was the American sense of humour. It was one of the things he had made a note of, as interfering with the intelligent stranger's enjoyment of the country.

"I suppose," I replied reproachfully, "you never pause to think how unkind a suspicion like that is? When one *wishes* to be taken seriously."

"I fear I do not," Mr. Mafferton confessed. "Perhaps I jump rather hastily to conclusions sometimes. It's a family trait. We get it through the Warwick-Howards on my mother's side."

"Then, of course, there can't be any objection to it. But when one knows a person's opinion of frivolity, always to be thought frivolous by the person is hard to bear. Awfully."

And if my expression, as I gazed past this Englishman at Vesuvius, was one of sad resignation, there was nothing in the situation to exhilarate anybody.

The impassive countenance of Mr. Mafferton was disturbed by a ray of concern. The moonlight enabled

me to see it quite clearly. "Pray, Miss Wick," he said, "do not think that. Who was it that wrote—

"A little humour now and then
Is relished by the wisest men."

"I don't know," I said, "but there's something about it that makes me think it is English in its origin. Do you *really* endorse it?"

"Certainly I do. And your liveliness, Miss Wick, if I may say so, is certainly one of your accomplishments. It is to some extent a racial characteristic. You share it with Mr. Dod."

I glanced in the direction of the other two. "They seem desperately bored with each other," I said. "They are not saying anything. Shall we join them?"

"Dod is probably sulking because I am monopolising you. Mrs. Portheris, you see, has let me into the secret" —Mr. Mafferton looked *very* arch—"By all means, if you think he ought to be humoured."

"No," I said firmly, "humouring is very bad for Dicky. But I don't think he should be allowed to wreak his ill-temper on Isabel."

"I have noticed a certain lack of power to take the initiative about Miss Portheris," said Mr. Mafferton coldly, "especially when her mother is not with her. She seems quite unable to extricate herself from situations like the present."

"She is so young," I said apologetically, "and besides, I don't think you could expect her to go quite away and leave us here together, you know. She would

naturally have foolish ideas. She doesn't know anything about our irrevocable Past."

"Why should she care?" asked Mr. Mafferton hypocritically.

"Oh," I said. "I don't know, I'm sure. Only Mrs. Portheris——"

"She is certainly a charming girl," said Mr. Mafferton.

"And *so* well brought up," said I.

"Ye-es. Perhaps a little self-contained."

"She has no need to rely upon her conversation." I observed.

"I don't know. The fact is——"

"What is the fact?" I asked softly. "After all that has passed I think I may claim your confidence, Mr. Mafferton." I had some difficulty afterwards in justifying this, but it seemed entirely appropriate at the time.

"The fact is, that up to three weeks ago I believed Miss Portheris to be the incarnation of so many unassuming virtues and personal charms that I was almost ready to make a fresh bid for domestic happiness in her society. I have for some time wished to marry——"

"I know," I said sympathetically.

"But during the last three weeks I have become a little uncertain."

"There shouldn't be the *slightest* uncertainty," I observed.

"Marriage in England is such a permanent institution."

"I have known it to last for years even in the United States," I sighed.

"And it is a serious responsibility to undertake to reciprocate in full the devotion of an attached wife."

"I fancy Isabel is a person of strong affections," I said; "one notices it with her mother. And any one who could dote on Mrs. Portheris would certainly——"

"I fear so," said Mr. Mafferton.

"I understand," I continued, "why you hesitate. And really, feeling as you do, I wouldn't be precipitate."

"I won't," he said.

"Watch the state of your own heart," I counselled, "for some little time. You may be sure that hers will not alter;" and, as we said good-night, I further suggested that it would be a kindness if Mr. Mafferton would join my lonely parent in the smoking-room.

I don't know what happened on the balcony after that.

CHAPTER XVI.

"MAMMA," said Isabel, as we gathered in the hotel vestibule for the start to Pompeii, "is really not fit to undertake it."

"You'll excuse me, Aunt Caroline," remarked the Senator, "but your complexion isn't by any means right yet. It's a warm day and a long drive. Just as likely as not you'll be down sick after it."

"Stuff!" said Mrs. Portheris. "I thank my stars *I* have got no enfeebled American constitution. I am perfectly equal to it, thank you."

"It's most unwise," observed Mr. Mafferton.

"Darned—I mean extremely risky," sighed Dicky.

Mrs. Portheris faced upon them. "And pray what do *you* know about it?" she demanded.

Then momma put in her oar, taking most unguardedly a privilege of relationship. "Of course, you are the best judge of how you feel yourself, Aunt Caroline, but we are told there are some steps to ascend when we get there—and you know how fleshy you are."

In the instant of ominous silence which occurred while Mrs. Portheris was getting her chin into the angle of its greatest majesty, Mr. Mafferton considerately

walked to the door. When it was accomplished she looked at momma sideways and down her nose, precisely in the manner of the late Mr. Du Maurier's ladies in *Punch*, in the same state of mind. She might have sat or stood to him. It was another ideal realised.

"That is the latest, the very latest Americanism which I have observed in your conversation, Augusta. In your native land it may be admissible, but please understand that I cannot permit it to be applied to me personally. To English ears it is offensive, very offensive. It is also quite improper for you to assume any familiarity with my figure. As you say, *I* may be aware of its corpulence, but nobody else—er—can possibly know anything about it."

Momma was speechless, and, as usual, the Senator came to the rescue. He never will allow momma to be trampled on, and there was distinct retaliation in his manner. "Look here, aunt," he said, "there's nothing profane in saying you're fleshy when you *are*, you know, and you don't need to remove so much as your bonnet strings for the general public to be aware of it. And when you come to America don't you ever insult anybody by calling her corpulent, which is a perfectly indecent expression. Now if you won't go back to bed and tranquillise your mind—on a plain soda——"

"I won't," said Mrs. Portheris.

"De carriages is already," said the head porter, glistening with an amiability of which we all appreciated the balm. And we entered the carriages—Mrs. Por-

theris and the downcast Isabel and Mr. Mafferton in one, and momma, poppa, Dicky, and I in the other. For no American would have been safe in Mrs. Portheris's carriage for at least two hours, and this came home even to Mr. Dod.

"Never again!" exclaimed momma as we rattled down among the narrow streets that crowd under the Funicular railway. "Never again will I call that woman Aunt Caroline."

"Don't call her fleshy, my dear, that's what really irritated her," remarked the Senator. The Senator's discrimination, I have often noticed, is not the nicest thing about him.

Hours and hours it seemed to take, that drive to Pompeii. Past the ambitious confectioner with his window full of cherry pies, each cherry round and red and shining like a marble, and the plate glass dry-goods store where ready-made costumes were displayed that looked as if they might fit just as badly as those of Westbourne Grove, and so by degrees and always down hill through narrower and shabbier streets where all the women walked bareheaded and the shops were mostly turned out on the pavement for the convenience of customers, and a good many of them went up and down in wheelbarrows. And often through narrow ways so high-walled and many-windowed that it was quite cool and dusky down below, and only a strip of sun showed far up along the roofs of one side. Here and there a wheelbarrow went strolling through these streets too, and we

saw at least one family marketing. From a little square window a prodigious way up came, as we passed, a cry with custom in it, and a wheelbarrow paused beneath. Then down from the window by a long, long rope slid a basket from the hands of a young woman leaning out in red, and the vendor took the opportunity of sitting down on his barrow handle till it arrived. Soldi and a piece of paper he took out of the basket and a cabbage and onions he put in, and then it went swinging upwards and he picked up his barrow again, and we rattled on and left him shouting and pushing his hat back—it was not a soft felt but a bowler—to look up at the other windows. In spite of the bowler it was a picturesque and Neapolitan incident, and it left us much divided as to the contents of the piece of paper.

"My idea is," said the Senator, "that the young woman in the red jersey was the hired girl and that note was what you might call a clandestine communication."

"Since we are in Naples," remarked Mr. Dod, "I think, Senator, your deduction is correct. Where we come from a slavey with any self-respect would put her sentiments on a gilt-edged correspondence card in a scented envelope with a stamp on the outside and ask you to kindly drop it into the pillar box on your way to business; but this chimes in with all you read about Naples."

"Perfectly ridiculous!" said momma. "Mark my words, that note was either a list of vegetables wanted, or an intimation that if they weren't going to be fresher

than the last, that man needn't stop for orders in future. And in a country as destitute of elevators as this one is I suppose you couldn't keep a servant a week if you didn't let her save the stairs somehow. But I must say if I were going to have cabbage and onions the same day I wouldn't like the neighbours to know it."

I entirely agreed with momma, and was reflecting, while they talked of something else, on the injustice of considering ours the sentimental sex, when the Senator leaned forward and advised me in an undertone to make a note of the market basket.

"And take my theory to account for the piece of paper," said he; "your mother's may be the most likely, but mine is *what the public will expect.*"

And always the shadows of the narrow streets crooked in the end into a little plaza full of sun and beggars, and lemonade stands, and hawkers of wild strawberries, and when the great bank of a flower-stall stood just where the shadow ended sharply and the sun began, it made something to remember. After that our way lay through a suburban parish *fête*, and we pursued it under strings and strings of little glass lanterns, red, and green, and blue, that swung across the streets; and there were goats and more children, and momma vainly endeavoured to keep off the smells with her parasol. Then a region of docks and masts rising unexpectedly, and many little fish shops, and a glitter of scales on the pavement, and disconnected coils of rope, and lounging men with earrings, and unkempt women with babies,

and above and over all the warm scent, standing still in the sun, of hemp, and tar, and the sea.

"The city," said the Senator, casting his practised eye on a piece of dead wall that ran along the pavement, "is evidently in the turmoil of a general election, though you mightn't notice it. It's the third time I've seen those posters '*Viva il Prefétto!*' and '*Viva L'opposizione!*' That seems to be about all they can do, just as if we contented ourselves with yelling ''Rah for Bryan!' 'One more for McKinley!' I must say if they haven't any more notion of business than that they don't either of 'em deserve to get there."

"In France," observed Mr. Dod, "they stick up little handbills addressed to their '*chers concitoyens*' as if voters were a lot of baa-lambs and willie-boys. It makes enervating reading."

"Young man," said poppa in a burst of feeling, "they say the American eagle might keep her beak shut with advantage, more than she does; but I tell you," and the Senator's hand came down hard on Dicky's knee, "a trip around Europe is enough to turn her into a singing bird, sir, a singing bird."

I don't get my imagination entirely from momma.

"*Viva il Prefétto! Viva L'opposizione!*" poppa repeated pityingly, as another pair of posters came in sight. "Well, it won't ever do the Government of Italy any good, but I guess I'm with the *Opposizione*."

The road grew emptier and sandy white, and commerce forsook it but for here and there a little shop with

fat yellow bags, which were the people's cheeses, hanging in bladders at the door. Crumbled gateways began to appear, and we saw through them that the villa gardens inside ran down and dropped their rose leaves into the blue of the Mediterranean. We met the country people going their ways to town; they looked at us with friendly patronage, knowing all about us, what we had come to see, and the foolishness of it, and especially the ridiculous cost of *carozza* that take people to Pompeii. And at last, just as the sun and the jolting and the powdery white dust combined had instigated us all to suggest to the Senator how much better it would have been to come by rail, the ponies made a glad and jingling sweep under the acacias of the Hôtel Diomede, which is at the portals of Pompeii.

It seemed a casual and a cheerful place, full of open doors and proprietary Neapolitans who might have been brothers and sisters-in-law, whose conversation we interrupted coming in. There had been domestic potations; a very fat lady, with a horn comb in her hair, wiped liquid rings off the table with her apron, removing the glasses, while a collarless male person with an agreeable smile and a soft felt hat placed wooden chairs for us in a row. Poppa knows no Italian, but they seemed to understand from what he said that we wanted things to drink, and brought us with surprising accuracy precisely what each of us preferred, lemonade for momma and me, and beverages consisting largely, though not entirely, of soda water for the Senator and Mr. Dod.

While we refreshed ourselves, another, elderly, grizzled, and one-eyed, came and took up a position just outside the door opposite and sang a song of adventurous love, boxing his own ears in the chorus with the liveliest effect. A further agreeable person waited upon us and informed us that he was the interpreter, he would everything explain to us, that this was a beggar man who wanted us to give him some small money, but there was no compulsion if we did not wish to do so. I think he gave us that interpretation for nothing. The fat lady then produced a large fan which she waved over us assiduously, and the collarless man in the soft hat stood by to render aid in any further emergency, smiling upon us as if we were delicacies out of season. Poppa bore it as long as he could, and we all made an unsuccessful effort to appear as if we were quite accustomed to as much attention and more in the hotels of America; but in a very few minutes we knew all the disadvantages of being of too much importance. Presently the one-eyed man gave way to a pair of players on the flute and mandolin.

"Look here," said poppa at this, to the interpreter, "you folks are putting yourselves out on our account a great deal more than is necessary. We are just ordinary travelling public, and you don't need to entertain us with side shows that we haven't ordered any more than if we belonged to your own town. See?" But the interpreter did not see. He beckoned instead to an engaging daughter of the fat lady, who approached

modestly with a large book of photographs, which she opened before the Senator, kneeling beside his chair.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed poppa, "I'm not a crowned head. Rise, Miss Diomede."

Removing his cigar, he assisted the young lady to her feet and led her to a sofa at the other end of the room, where, as they turned over the photographs together, I heard him ask her if she objected to tobacco.

"You may go," said momma to the interpreter, "and explain the scenes. Mr. Wick will enjoy them much more if he understands them." The freedom from conventional restraint which characterises American society very seldom extends to married gentlemen.

We had to wait twenty minutes for the other party, on account of their British objection to anybody's dust. Even Mr. Mafferton looked quelled when they arrived, and Isabel quite abject, while Mrs. Portheris wore that air of justification which no circumstance could impair, which was particularly her own. She would not sit down. "It gives these people a claim on you," she said. "I did not come here to run up an hotel bill, but to see Pompeii. Pompeii I demand to see." The players on the flute and mandolin looked at Mrs. Portheris consideringly and then strolled away, and the guide, with a sorrowful glance at the landlady, put on his hat. "I can explain you everything," he said with an inflection that placed the responsibility for remaining in ignorance upon our own heads, but Mrs. Portheris waved him away with her fan. "No," she said. "I beg that



" I'm not a crowned head!"

this man shall not be allowed to inflict himself upon our party. I particularly desire to form my own impression of the historic city, that city that did so much for the reputation of Sir Henry Bulwer Lytton. Besides, these people mount up ridiculously, and with servants at home on half wages, and Consols in the state they are, one is really com*pelled* to economise."

It was difficult to protest against Mrs. Portheris's regulations, and impossible to contravene them, so I have nothing to report of that guide but his card, which bore the name "Antonio Plicco," and his memory, which is a blank.

There was an ascent, and Mrs. Portheris mounted it proudly. I pointed out to poppa half-way up that his esteemed relative hadn't turned a hair, but he was inclined to be incredulous; said you couldn't tell what was going on in the Department of the Interior. The Senator often uses a political reference to carry him over a delicate allusion. Flowering shrubs and bushes lined the path we climbed, silent in the sunshine, dustily decorative, and at the top the turning of a key let us into a strange place. Always a strange place, however often the guide-books beat their iterations upon it, a place that leaps at imagination, peering into other days through the mists that lie between, and blinds it with a rush of light—the place where they have gathered together what was left of the dead Pompeiians and their world. There they lay before us for our wonderment as they ran, and tripped, and struggled, and fell in the night of

that day when they and the gods together were overwhelmed, and they died as they thought in the end of time. And through an open door Vesuvius sent up its eternal gentle woolly curl again the daylight sky, and vineyards throve, and birds sang, and we, who had survived the gods, came curious to look. The figures lay in glass cases, and Dicky remarked, with unusual seriousness, that it was like a dead-house.

"Except," said poppa, "that in this mortuary there isn't ever going to be anybody who can identify the remains. When you come to think of it—that's kind of hard."

"No chance of Christian burial once you get into a museum," said Dick with solicitude.

"I should like," remarked Mrs. Portheris, polishing her *pince nez* to get a better view of a mother and daughter lying on their faces. "I should like to see the clergyman who would attempt it. These people were heathen, and richly deserved their fate. Richly!"

Momma looked at her husband's Aunt Caroline with indignant scorn. "Do you really think so?" she asked, but we could all see that her words were a very inadequate expression for her emotions. Mrs. Portheris drew all the guns of her orthodoxy into line for battle. "I am surprised——" she began, and then the Senator politely but firmly interfered.

"Ladies," he said, "'*De mortuis nisi bonum*,' which is to say it isn't customary to slang corpses, especially, as you may say, in their presence. I guess we can all

be thankful, anyhow, that heathen nowadays have got a cooler earth to live on," and that for the moment was the end of it, but momma still gazed commiseratingly at the figures, with a suspicious tendency to look for her handkerchief.

"It's too terrible," she said. "We can actually see their *features*."

"Don't let them get on your nerves, Augusta," suggested poppa.

"I won't if I can help it. But when you see their clothes and their hair and realise——"

"It happened over eighteen hundred years ago, my dear, and most of them got away."

"That didn't make it any better for those who are now before us," and momma used her handkerchief threateningly, though it was only in connection with her nose.

"Well now, Augusta, I hate to destroy an illusion like that, because they're not to be bought with money, but since you're determined to work yourself up over these unfortunates, I've got to expose them to you. They're not the genuine remains you take them for. They're mere worthless imitations."

"Alexander," said momma suspiciously, "you never hesitate to tamper with the truth if you think it will make me any more comfortable. I don't believe you."

"All right," returned the Senator; "when we get home you ask Bramley. It was Bramley that put me on to it. Whenever one of those Pompeii fellows

dropped, the ashes kind of caked over him, and in the course of time there was a hole where he had been. See? And what you're looking at is just a collection of those holes filled up with composition and then dug out. Mere holes!"

"The illusion is dreadfully perfect," sighed momma. "Fancy dying like a baked potato in hot ashes! Somehow, Alexander, I don't seem able to get over it," and momma gazed with distressed fascination at the grim form of the negro porter.

"We've got no proper grounds for coming to that conclusion either," replied poppa firmly. "Just as likely they were suffocated by the gas that came up out of the ground."

"Oh, if I could think that!" momma exclaimed with relief. "But if I find you've been deceiving me, Alexander, I'll never forgive you. It's *too* solemn!"

"You ask Bramley," I heard the Senator reply. "And now come and tell me if this loaf of bread somebody baked eighteen hundred and twenty something years ago isn't exactly the same shape as the Naples bakers are selling right now."

"Daughter," said momma as she went, "I hope you are taking copious notes. This is the wonder of wonders that we behold to-day." I said I was, and I wandered over to where Mrs. Portheris examined with Mr. Mafferton an egg that was laid on the last day of Pompeii. Mrs. Portheris was asking Mr. Mafferton, in her most impressive manner, if it was not too wonderful to have

positive proof that fowls laid eggs then just as they do now; and I made a note of that too. Dicky and Isabel bemoaned the fate of the immortal dog who still bites his flank in the pain extinguished so long ago. I hardly liked to disturb them, but I heard Dicky say as I passed that he didn't mind much about the humans, they had their chance, but this poor little old tyke was tied up, and that on the part of Providence was playing it low down.

Then we all stepped out into the empty streets of Pompeii and Mr. Mafferton read to us impressively, from Murray, the younger Pliny's letter to Tacitus describing its great disaster. The Senator listened thoughtfully, for Pliny goes into all kinds of interesting details. "I haven't much acquaintance with the classics," said he, as Mr. Mafferton finished, "but it strikes me that the modern New York newspaper was the medium to do that man justice. It's the most remarkable case I've noticed of a good reporter *born before his time.*"

"A terrible retribution," said Mrs. Portheris, looking severely at the Tavern of Phœbus, forever empty of wine-bibbers. "They worshipped Jupiter, I understand, and other deities even less respectable. Can we wonder that a volcano was sent to destroy them! One thing we may be quite sure of—if the city had only turned from its wickedness and embraced Christianity, this never would have happened."

Momma compressed her lips and then relaxed them again to say, "I think that idea perfectly ridiculous."

I scented battle and hung upon the issue, but the Senator for the third time interposed.

"Why no, Augusta," he said, "I guess that's a working hypothesis of Aunt Caroline's. Here's Vesuvius smokin' away ever since just the same, and there's Naples with a bishop and the relics of Saint Januarius. You can read in your guide-book that whenever Vesuvius has looked as if he meant business for the past few hundred years, the people of Naples have simply called on the bishop to take out the relics of Saint Januarius and walk 'em round the town; and that's always been enough for Vesuvius. Now the Pompeii folks didn't know a saint or a bishop by sight, and Jupiter, as Aunt Caroline says, was never properly qualified to interfere. That's how it was, I pre*sume*. I don't suppose the people of Naples take much stock in the laws of nature; they don't have to, with Januarius in a drawer. And real estate keeps booming right along."

"You have an extraordinary way of putting things," remarked Mrs. Portheris to her nephew. "Very extraordinary. But I am glad to hear that you agree with me," and she looked as if she did not understand momma's acquiescent smile.

We went our several ways to see the baths, and the Comic Theatre, the bakehouse and the gymnasium; and I had a little walk by myself in the Street of Abundance, where the little empty houses waited patiently on either side for those to return who had gone out, and the sun lay full on their floors of dusty mosaic, and their gar-

dens where nothing grew. It seemed to me, as it seems to everybody, that Pompeii was not dead, but asleep, and her tints were so clear and gay that her dreams might be those of a ballet-girl. A solitary yellow dog chased a lizard in the sun, and the pebbles he knocked about made an absurdly disturbing noise. Beyond the vague tinted roofless walls that stretched over the pleasant little peninsula, the blue sea rippled tenderly, remembering much delight, and the place seemed to smile in its sleep. It was easy to understand why Cicero chose to have his villa in the midst of such light-heartedness, and why the gods, perhaps, decided that they had lent too much laughter to Pompeii. I made free of the hospitality of Cornelius Rufus and sat for a while in his *exedra*, where he himself, in marble on a little pillar in the middle of the room, made me as welcome as if I had been a client or a neighbour. We considered each other across the centuries, making mutual allowances, and spent the most sociable half-hour. I take a personal interest in the city's disaster now—it overwhelmed one of my friends.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the Lungarno in Florence, in the cool of the evening, we walked together, the Senator, momma, Dicky, and I. Dicky radiated depression, if such a thing is atmospherically possible; we all moved in it. Mr. Dod had been banished from the Portheris party, and he groaned over the reflection that it was his own fault. At Pompeii I had exerted myself in his interest to such an extent that Mr. Mafferton detached himself from Mrs. Portheris and attached himself to momma for the drive home. Little did I realise that one could be too agreeable in a good cause. Dicky insinuated himself with difficulty into Mr. Mafferton's vacant place opposite Mrs. Portheris, and even before the carriages started I saw that he was going to have a bad time. His own version of the experience was painful in the extreme, and he represented the climax as having occurred just as they arrived at the hotel. The unfortunate youth must have been goaded to his fate, for his general attitude toward matters of orthodoxy was most discreet.

"There is something *Biblical*," said Mrs. Portheris (so Dicky related), "that those Pompeiian remains remind me of, and I cannot think what it is."

"Lot's wife, mamma?" said Isabel.

"*Quite* right, my child—what a memory you have! That wretched woman who stopped to look back at the city where careless friends and relatives were enjoying themselves, indifferent to their coming fate, in direct disobedience to the command. Of course, she turned to salt, and these people to ashes, but she must have looked very much like them when the process was completed."

That was Dicky's opportunity for restraint and submission, but he seemed to have been physically unable to take it. He rushed, instead, blindly to perdition. "I don't believe that yarn," he said.

There was a moment's awful silence, during which Dicky said he counted his heart-beats and felt as if he had announced himself an atheist or a Jew, and then his sentence fell.

"In that case, Mr. Dod, I must infer that you are opposed to the doctrine of the complete inspiration of Holy Writ. If you do not believe in that, I shudder to think of what you may not believe in. I will say no more now, but after dinner I will be obliged to speak to you for a few minutes, privately. Thank you, I can get out without assistance."

And after dinner, privately, Dicky learned that Mrs. Portheris had for some time been seriously considering the effect of his, to her, painfully flippant views, upon the opening mind of her daughter—the child had only been out six months—and that his distressing announcement of this morning left her in no further doubt as to

her path of duty. She would always endeavour to have as kindly a recollection of him as possible, he had really been very obliging, but for the present she must ask him to make some other travelling arrangements. Cook, she believed, would always change one's tickets less ten per cent., but she would leave that to Dicky. And she hoped, she *sincerely* hoped, that time would improve his views. When that was accomplished she trusted he would write and tell her, but not before.

"And while I'm getting good and ready to pass an examination in Noah, Jonah, and Methuselah," remarked Dicky bitterly, as we discussed the situation on the Lungarno for the seventh time that day, "Mafferton sails in."

"Why didn't you tell her plainly that you wanted to marry Isabel, and would brook no opposition?" I demanded, for my stock of sympathy was getting low.

"Now that's a valuable suggestion, isn't it?" retured Mr. Dod with sarcasm. "Good old psychological moment that was, wasn't it? Talk about girls having tact! Besides, I've never told Isabel herself yet, and I'm not the American to give in to the effete and decaying custom of asking a girl's poppa, or momma if it's a case of widow, first. Not Richard Dod."

"What on earth," I exclaimed, "have you been doing all this time?"

"Now go slow, Mamie, and don't look at me like that. I've been trying to make her acquainted with

me—explaining the kind of fellow I am—getting solid with her. See?"

"Showing her the beauties of your character!" I exclaimed derisively.

"I said something about the defects, too," said Dicky modestly, "though not so much. And I was getting on beautifully, though it isn't so easy with an English girl. They don't seem to think it's proper to analyse your character. They're so maidenly."

"And so unenterprising," I said, but I said it to myself.

"Isabel was actually beginning to *lead up to the subject*," Dicky went on. "She asked me the other day if it was true that all American men were flirts. In another week I should have felt that she would know what was proposing to her."

"And you were going to wait another week?"

"Well, a man wants every advantage," said Dicky blandly.

"Did you explain to Isabel that you were only joining our party in the hope of meeting her accidentally soon again?"

"What else," asked he in pained surprise, "should I have joined it for? No, I didn't; I hadn't the chance, for one thing. You took the first train back to Rome next morning, you know. She wasn't up."

"True," I responded. "Momma said not another hour of her husband's Aunt Caroline would she ever willingly endure. She said she would spend her entire

life, if necessary, in avoiding the woman." But Dicky had not followed the drift of my thought.

I added vaguely, "I hope she will understand it" —I really couldn't be more definite—and bade Mr. Dod good-night. He held my hand absent-mindedly for a moment, and mentioned the effectiveness of the Ponte Vecchio from that point of view.

"I didn't feel bound to change my tickets less ten per cent.," he said hopefully, "and we're sure to come across them early and often. In the meantime you might try and soften me a little—about Lot's wife."

Next day, in the Ufizzi, it was no surprise to meet the Miss Binghams. We had a guilty consciousness of fellow-citizenship as we recognised them, and did our best to look as if two weeks were quite long enough to be forgotten in, but they seemed charitable and forgiving on this account, said they had looked out for us everywhere, and *had* we seen the cuttings in the Vatican?

"The statues, you know," explained Miss Cora kindly, seeing that we did not comprehend. "Marvellous—simply marvellous! We enjoyed nothing so much as the marble department. It takes it out of you though —we were awfully done afterwards."

I wondered what Phidias would have said to the "cuttings," and whether the Miss Binghams imagined it a Briticism. It also occurred to me that one should never mix one's colloquialisms; but that, of course, did not prevent their coming round with us. I believe they

did it partly to diffuse their guide among a larger party. He was hanging, as they came up, upon Miss Cora's reluctant earring, so to speak, and she was mechanically saying, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" to his representations. "I suppose," said she inadvertently, "there is no way of pre*vent*ing their giving one information," and after that when she hospitably pressed the guide upon us we felt at liberty to be unappreciative.

I regret to write it of two maiden ladies of good New York family, and a knowledge of the world; but the Miss Binghams capitulated to Dicky Dod with a promptness and unanimity which would have been very bad for him if nobody had been there to counteract its effects. He walked between them through the vestibules, absorbing a flow of tribute from each side with a complacency which his recent trying experiences made all the more profound. There was always a something, Miss Nancy declared, about an American who had made his home in England—you could always tell. "In your case, Mr. Dod, there is an association of Bond Street. I can't describe it, but it is there. I hope you don't mind my saying so."

"Oh, no," said Dicky, "I guess it's my tailor. He lives in Bond Street;" but this was artless and not ironical. Miss Cora went further. "I should have taken Mr. Dod for an Englishman," she said, at which the miscalculated Mr. Dod looked alarmed.

"Is that so?" he responded. "Then I'll book my passage back at once. I've been over there too long.

You see I've been kind of obliged to stay for reasons connected with the firm, but you ladies can take my word for it that when you get through this sort of ridiculous veneer I've picked up you'll find a regular all-wool-and-a-yard-wide city-of-Chicago American, and I'm bound to ask you not to forget it. This English way of talking is a thing that grows on a fellow unconsciously, don't you know. It wears off when you get home."

At which Miss Cora and Miss Nancy looked at each other smilingly and repeated "Don't you know" in derisive echo, and we all felt that our young friend had been too modest about his acquirements.

"But we mustn't neglect our old masters," cried Miss Nancy as those of the first corridor began to slip past us on the walls, with no desire to interrupt. "What do you think of this Greek Byzantine style, Mr. Wick? Somehow it doesn't seem to appeal to me, though whether it's the flatness—or what——"

"It *is* flat, certainly," agreed the Senator, "but that's a very popular style of angel for Christmas cards—the more expensive kinds. Here, I suppose, we get the original."

"That is Tuscan school, sir—madam," put in the guide, "and not angel—Saint Cecilia. Fourteen century, but we do not know that artiss his name. In the book you will see Cimabue, but it is not Cimabue—unknown artiss."

"Dear me!" cried momma. "St. Cecilia, of course.

Don't you remember her expression—in the Catacombs?"

"She's sweet, always and everywhere," said Miss Cora, as we moved on, leaving the guide explaining St. Cecilia with his hands behind his back. "And you did go to Capri after all? Now I wonder, Nancy, if they had our experience about the oysters?"

"A horrid little man!" cried momma.

"Who showed you the way to the steamer——"

"And hung around doing things the whole enduring time," continued my parent, as Mark Antony's daughter turned her head aside, and Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, frowned upon our passing.

"He must have been our man!" cried both the Misses Bingham, with excitement.

"In the manner of Taddeo Gaddi," interrupted the guide, surprising us on the flank with a Holy Family.

"All right," said the Senator. "Well, this fellow proposed to bring our party oysters on the steamer, and we took him, of course, for the steward's tout——"

"Exactly what we thought."

"Since *you* are going to tell the story, Alexander, I may remind you that he said they were the best in the world," remarked momma, with several degrees of frost.

"My dear, the anecdote is yours. But you remember I told him they wouldn't be in it with Blue Points."

"Now *what*," exclaimed Miss Nancy, with excitement, "did he ask you for them?"

"Three francs a head, Nancy, wasn't it, Mrs. Wick?

And you gave the order, and the man disappeared. And you thought he'd gone to get them; at least, we did. Nancy here had perfect confidence in him. She said he had such dog-like eyes, and we were both perfectly certain they would be served when the steamer stopped at the Blue Grotto——" Miss Cora paused to smile.

"But they weren't," suggested momma feebly.

"No, indeed, and hadn't the slightest intention of being." Miss Nancy took up the tale. "Not until we were taking off our gloves in the hotel verandah, and making up our minds to a good hot lunch, did those oysters appear—exactly half a dozen, and bread and butter extra! And we couldn't say we hadn't ordered them. And the lunch was only two francs fifty, *complet.* But we felt we ought to content ourselves with the oysters, though, of course, you wouldn't with gentlemen in your party. Now, what course *did* you pursue, Mrs. Wick?"

"Really," said momma distantly, "I don't remember. I believe we had enough to eat. Surely that is little Moses being taken from the bulrushes! How it adds to one's interest to recognise the subject."

"By B. Luti," responded Miss Nancy. "I *hope* he isn't very well known, for I never heard of him before. Now, there's a Domenichino; I can tell it from here. I do love Domenichino, don't you?"

I suppose the Senator knew that momma didn't love Domenichino, and would possibly be at a loss to say

why; at all events, he remarked that, talking of Capri, he hoped the Miss Binghams had not felt as badly about inconveniencing the donkeys that took them to the top of the cliff as momma had. "Mrs. Wick," he informed them, "rode an ass by the name of Michael Angelo, perfectly accustomed to the climate, and, do you believe it, she held her parasol over that animal's head the whole way." At which everybody laughed, and momma, invested with an original and amiable weakness, was appeased.

"Of Michelangelo we have not here much," said the guide patiently. "Drawings yes, and one holy Family —magnificent! But all in another room w'ich——"

"Now what Bramley said about the Ufizzi was this," continued the Senator. "'You'll see on those walls,' he said, 'the best picture show in the world, both for pedigree and quality of goods displayed. I'd go as far as to say they're all worth looking at, even those that have been presented to the institution. But don't you look at them,' Bramley said, 'as a whole. You keep all your absorbing power for one apartment,' he said— 'the Tribune. You'll want it.' Bramley gave me to understand that it wasn't any use he didn't profess to be able to describe his sublimer emotions, but when he sat down in the Tribune he had a sort of instinctive idea that he'd got the cream of it—he didn't want to go any further."

We decided, therefore, in spite of such minor attractions as those of Niobe and her daughters, at once to

achieve the Tribune, feeling, as poppa said, that it would be most unfortunate to have our admiration all used up before we reached it. The guide led the way, and it was beguiled with the fascinating experience of the Miss Binghams, who had met Queen Marguerite driving in the Villa Borghese at Rome and had received a bow from her Majesty of which nothing would ever be able to deprive them. "Of course we drew up to let her pass," said Miss Nancy, "and were careful not to make ourselves in any way conspicuous, merely standing up in the carriage as an ordinary mark of respect. And she looked charming, all in pink and white, with a faded old maid of honour that set her off beautifully, didn't she, Cora? And such a pretty smile she gave us—they say she likes the better class of Americans."

"Oh, we've nothing to regret about Rome," rejoined Cora. "Even Peter's toe. I wouldn't have kissed it at the time if the guide hadn't said it was really Jupiter's. I was sure our dear vicar wouldn't mind my kissing Jupiter's toe. But now I'm glad I did it in any case. People always ask you that."

When we arrived at the little octagonal treasure chamber Mr. Dod and Miss Cora sat down together on one of the less conspicuous sofas, and I saw that Dicky was already warmed to confidence. Momma at once gave up her soul to the young St. John, having had an engraving of it ever since she was a little girl, and the Senator went solemnly from canvas to canvas on tip-toe with a mind equally open to Job and the Forna-

rina. He assured Miss Nancy and me that Bramley was perfectly right in thinking everything of the Tribune, and with reference to the Dancing Fawn, that it was worth a visit to see Michael Angelo's notion of executing repairs to statuary alone. He gave the place the benefit of his most serious attention, pulling his beard a good deal before Titian's Venus (which poppa always did in connection with this goddess, however, entirely apart from the merit of the painting) and obviously making allowances for her of Medici on account of her great age. At the end of the hour we spent there it had the same effect upon him as upon Colonel Bramley, he did not wish to go any further; and we parted from the Miss Binghams, who did. As I said good-bye to Miss Cora she gave my hand a subtly sympathetic pressure, whispered tenderly, "He's very nice," and roguishly escaped before I could ask who was, or what difference it made. Having thought it over, I took the first opportunity of inquiring of Dicky how much of his private affairs he had unburdened to Miss Cora. "Oh," said he, "hardly anything. She knows a former young lady friend of mine in Syracuse—we still exchange Christmas cards—and that led me on to say I thought of getting married this winter. Of course I didn't mention Isabel."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Out of indulgence to Dicky we lingered in Florence three or four days longer than was at all convenient, considering, as the Senator said, the amount of ground we had to cover before we could conscientiously recross the Channel. But neither poppa nor momma were people to desert a fellow-countryman in distress in foreign parts, especially in view of this one's pathetic reliance upon our sympathy and support, as a family. We all did our best toward the distraction of what momma called his poor mind, though I cannot say that we were very successful. His poor mind seemed wholly taken up with one anticipative idea, and whatever failed to minister to that he hadn't, as poppa sadly said, any use for. The cloisters of San Marco had no healing for his spirit, and when we directed his attention to the solitary painting on the wall with which Fra Angelico made a shrine of each of its monastic cubicles he merely remarked that it was more than you got in most hotels, and turned joylessly away. Even the charred stick that helped to martyr Savonarola left him cold. He said, indifferently, that it was only the natural result of mixing up politics and religion, and that certain Chicago

ministers who supported Bryan from the pulpit might well take warning. But his words were apathetic; he did not really care whether those Chicago ministers went to the stake or not. We stood him before the bronze gates of Ghiberti, and walked him up and down between rows of works in *pietra dura*, but without any permanent effect, and when he contemplated the consecrated residences of Cimabue and Cellini, we could see that his interest was perfunctory, and that out of the corner of his eye he really considered passing fiacres. I read to him aloud from "Romola," and momma bought him an English and Italian washing book that he might keep a record of his *camicie* and his *fazzoletti*—it would be so interesting afterwards, she thought—while the Senator exerted himself in the way of cheerful conversation, but it was very discouraging. Even when we dined at the fashionable open air restaurant in the Cascine, with no less a person than Ouida, in a fluff of grey hair and black lace, at the next table, and the most distinguished gambler of the Italian aristocracy presenting a narrow back to us from the other side, he permitted poppa to compare the quality of the beef fillets unfavourably with those of New York in silence, and drank his Chianti with a lack-lustre eye.

Towards the end of the week, however, Dicky grew remorseful. "It's all very well," he said to me privately, "for Mrs. Wick to say that she could spend a lifetime in Florence, if the houses only had a few modern conveniences. I daresay she could—and as for your

poppa, he's as patient as if this were a Washington hotel and he had a caucus every night, but it's as plain as Dante's nose that the Senator's dead sick of this city."

"Dicky," I said, "that is a reflection of your own state of mind. Poppa is willing to take as much more Botticelli and Filippo Lippi as it may be necessary to give him."

"Oh, I know he *would*," Dicky admitted, "but he isn't as young as he was, and I should hate to feel I was imposing on him. Besides, I'm beginning to conclude that they've skipped Florence."

So it came to pass that we departed for Venice next day, tarrying one night at Bologna. We had cut a day off Bologna for Dicky's sake, but the Senator could not be persuaded to sacrifice it altogether on account of its well known manufacture, into the conditions of which he wished to inquire. The shops, as we drove to the hotel, seemed to expose nothing else for sale, but poppa said that, in spite of the local consumption, it had certainly fallen off, and, as an official representative of one of its great rivals in the west, he naturally felt a compunctious interest in the state of the industry. The hotel had a little courtyard, with an orange tree in the middle and palms in pots, and we came down the wide marble stairs, past the statues on the landing, and the paintings on the walls, to find dinner laid on round tables out there, I remember. A note of momma's occurs here to the effect that there is a great deal too much fine art in Italian hotels, with a reference to the

fact that the one at Naples had the whole of Pompeii painted on the dining room walls. She considers this practice embarrassing to the public mind, which has no way of knowing whether to admire these things or not, though personally we boldly decided to scorn them all. This, however, has nothing to do with poppa and the commercial traveller. We knew he was a commercial traveller by the way he put his toothpick in his pocket, though poppa said afterwards that he was not exceptionally endowed for that line of business. He was dining at our table, and by his gratified manner when we sat down, it was plain that he could speak English and would be very pleased to do so. Poppa, knowing that his time was short, began at once.

"You belong to Bologna, sir?" he inquired with his first spoonful of soup. For some reason it seems impossible to address a stranger at a *table d'hôte*, before the soup takes the baldness off the situation.

The gentleman smiled. He had a broad, open, amiable, red face, with a short black beard and a round head covered with thick hair in curls, beautifully parted. "I do not think I belong," he said; "my house of business, it is at Milan, and I am born at Finalmarina. But I come much to Bologna, yes."

"Where did you say you were born?" asked the Senator.

"Finalmarina. You did not go to there, no? I am sorry."

"It does seem a pity," replied poppa, "but we've

been obliged to pass a considerable number of your commercial centres, sir. This city, I presume, has large manufacturing interests?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose. You 'ave seen that San Petronio, you cannot help. Very enorm'! More big than San Peter in Rome. But not complete since fourteenth century. In America you 'ave nothing unfinish, is it not?"

"Far as that goes," said poppa, "we generally manage to complete our contracts within the year; as a rule, I may say within the building season. But I have seen one or two Roman Catholic churches left with the scaffolding hanging round the ceiling for a good deal longer, the altar all fixed up too, and public worship going on just as usual. It seems to be a way they have. Well, sir, I knew Bologna, by reputation, better than any other Italian city, for years. Your local manufacture did the business. As a boy at school, there was nothing I was more fond of for my dinner. Thirty years ago, sir, the interest was created that brings me here to-day."

The commercial traveller bowed with much gratification. In the meantime he had presented a card to momma, which informed her that Ricardo Bellini represented the firm of Isapetti and Co., Milan, Artificial Flowers and Lace.

"Thirty years, that is a long time to remember Bologna, I cannot say that thirty years I remember New York. You will not believe!" He was obviously not more than twenty-five, so this was vastly humorous.

"Twenty years, yes, twenty years I will say! And have you seen San Stefano? Seven churches in one! Also the most old. And having forty Jerusalem martyrs."

"Forty would go a long way in relics," the Senator observed with discouragement, "but my remarks had reference to the Bologna sausage, sir."

"Sausage—ah! *mortadella*—yes they make here I believe." Mr. Bellini held up his knife and fork to enable his plate to be changed and looked darkly at the succeeding course. "But every Italian cannot like that dish. I eat him never. You will not find in this hotel no." His manner indicated a personal hostility to the Bologna sausage, but the Senator did not seem to notice it.

"You don't say so! Local consumption going off too, eh? Now how do you explain that?"

Mr. Bellini shrugged his shoulders. "It is much eat by the poor people. They will always have that *mortadella!*"

"That looks," said the Senator thoughtfully, "like the production of an inferior article. But not necessarily, not necessarily, of course."

"Bologna it is very *ecclesiastic.*" Mr. Bellini addressed my other parent, recovering a smile. "We have produced here six popes. It is the fame of Bologna."

"You seem to think a great deal of producing popes in Italy," momma replied coldly. "I should consider it a terrible responsibility."

"Now do you suppose," said poppa confidentially,

"that the idea of trichinosis had anything to do with slackening the demand?"

Mr. Bellini threw his head back, and passionately replaced a section of biscuit and cheese in the middle of his plate.

"I know nossing, any more than you! Why you speak me always that Bologna sausage! *Pazienza!* What is it that sausage to make the agreeable conversation!"

"Sir," exclaimed the Senator with astonishment and equal heat, "you don't seem to be aware of it, but at one time the Bologna sausage ruled the world!"

Mr. Bellini, however, could evidently not trust himself to discuss the matter further. He rose precipitately with an outraged, impersonal bow, and left the table, abandoning his biscuit and cheese, his half finished bottle of Rudesheimer and the figs that were to follow, with the indifference of a lofty nature.

"I'm sorry I spoiled his dinner," said poppa with concern, "but if a Bologna man can't talk about Bologna sausages, what can he talk about?"

It made the Senator reticent, though, as to sausages of any kind, with the other commercial traveller—the hotel was full of them, and we found it very entertaining after the barren dining rooms of southern Italy—with whom we breakfasted. He spoke to this one exclusively about the architectural and historic features of the city, in a manner which forbade any approach to gastronomic themes, and while the second commercial

traveller regarded him with great respect, it must be confessed that the conversation languished. Dicky might have helped us out, but Dicky was following his usual custom of having rooms in one hotel and covering as many others as possible with his meals, in the hope of an accidental meeting. This was excellent as a distraction for his mind, but since it occasionally led him into three *déjeuners* and two dinners, rather bad, we feared, for other parts of him. He had confided his design to me; he intended, on meeting Isabel's eye, to turn very pale, abruptly terminate his repast, ask for his hat and stick, and walk out with conspicuous agitation. As to the course he meant to pursue afterwards he was vague; the great thing was to make an impression upon Isabel. We differed about the nature of the impression. Dicky took it for granted that she would be profoundly affected, but he made no allowance for the way in which maternal vigilance like that of Mrs. Portheris can discourage the imagination.

Poppa made two further attempts to inform himself upon the leading manufacturing interest of Bologna. He inquired of the *padrone*, who was pleased to hear that Bologna had a leading manufacturing interest, and when my parent asked where he could see the process, pointed out several shops in the Piazza Maggiore. One of these the Senator visited, note-book in hand, and was shown with great alacrity every variety of *mortadella*, from delicacies the size of a finger to mottled conceptions as thick as a small barrel. He found a difficulty

in explaining, however, even with an Italian phrase book, that it was the manufacture only about which he was curious, and that, admirable as the result might be, he did not wish to buy any of it. When the latter fact finally made itself plain, the proprietor became truculent and gave us, although he spoke no English, so vivid an idea of the inconsistency of our presence in his premises, that we retired in all the irritation of the well-meaning and misunderstood. The Senator, however, who had absolute confidence in his phrase book, saw a deeper significance in the remarkable unwillingness of the people of Bologna to expatiate upon the feature which had given them fame. "The fact is," said he gloomily, restoring his note-book to his inside pocket as we entered the terra-cotta doorway of St. Catarina, "they're not anxious to let a stranger into the know of it." And this conviction remaining with him, still inspires the Senator with a contemptuous pity for the porcine methods of a people who refuse to submit them to the light of day and the observation of the world at large.

CHAPTER XIX.

So far, momma said she had every reason to be pleased with the effect on her mind. About the Senator's she would not commit herself, beyond saying that we had a great deal to be thankful for in that his health hadn't suffered, in spite of the indigestibility of that eternal French twist and honey that you were obliged on the Continent to begin the day with. She hoped, I think, that the Senator had absorbed other things beside the French twist equally unconsciously, with beneficial results that would appear later. He said himself that it was well worth anybody's while to make the trip, if only in order to be better satisfied with America for the rest of his life, but why people belonging to the United States and the nineteenth century should want to spend whole summers in the Middle Ages he failed to understand. Both my parents, however, looked forward to Venice with enthusiasm. Momma expected it to be the realization of all her dreams, and poppa decided that it must, at all events, be unique. It couldn't have any Arno or any Campagna in the nature of things—that would be a change—and it was not possible to the human mind, however sophisticated, with a livelong

experience of street cars and herdics, to stroll up and take a seat in a gondola and know exactly what would happen, where the fare-box was and everything, and whether they took Swiss silver, and if a gentleman in a crowded gondola was expected to give up his seat to a lady and stand. Poppa, as a stranger and unaccustomed to the motion, hoped this would not be the case, but I knew him well enough to predict that if it were so he would vindicate American gallantry at all risks.

Thus it was that, from the moment momma put her head out of the car window, after Mestre, and exclaimed, "It's getting wateryer and wateryer," Venice was a source of the completest joy and satisfaction to both my parents. Dicky and I took it with the more moderate appreciation natural to our years, but it gave us the greatest pleasure to watch the simple and unrestrained delight of momma and poppa, and to revert, as it were, in their experience, to what our own enjoyment might have been had we been born when they were. "No express agents, no delivery carts, no baggage checks," murmured poppa, as our trunks glided up to the hotel steps, "but it gets there all the same." This was the keynote of his admiration—everything got there all the same. The surprise of it was repeated every time anything got there, and was only dashed once when we saw brown-paper parcels being delivered by a boy at the back door of the Palazzo Balbi, who had evidently walked all the way. The Senator commented upon that boy and his groceries as an inconsistency, and there-

after carefully closed his eyes to the fact that even our own hotel, which faced upon the Grand Canal, had communications to the rear by which its guests could explore a large part of commercial Venice without going in a gondola at all. The canals were the only highways he would recognise, and he went three times to St. Maria della Salute, which was immediately opposite, for the sake of crossing the street in the Venetian way. Momma became really hopeful about the stimulus to his imagination; she told him so. "It appeals to you, Alexander," she said. "Its poetry comes home to you —you needn't deny it;" and poppa cordially admitted it. "Yes," he said, "Ruskin, according to the guide-book, doesn't seem as if he could say too much about this city, and Bramley was just the same. They're both right, and if we were going to be here long enough I'd be like that myself. There's something about it that makes you willing to take a lot of trouble to describe it. There's no use saying it's the canals, or the reflections in the water, or the bridges, or the pigeons, or the gargoyles, or the gondolas——"

"Or Salviati, or Jesurum," said momma, in lighter vein.

"Your memory, Augusta, for the names of old masters is perfectly wonderful," continued poppa placidly. "Or Salviati, or Jesurum, or what. But there's a kind of local spell about this place——"

"There are various kinds of local smells," interrupted Dicky, whom Mrs. Portheris still evaded, but

this levity received no encouragement from the Senator. He said instead that he hadn't noticed them himself. For his part he had come to Venice to use his eyes, not his nose; and Dicky, thus discouraged, faded visibly upon his stem.

I could see that poppa was still strongly under the influence of the Venetian sentiment when he invited me to go out in a gondola with him after dinner, and pointedly neglected to suggest that either momma or Dicky should come too. I had a presentiment of his intention. If I have seemed, thus far, to omit all reference to Mr. Page in Boston, since we left Paris, it is, first, because I believe it is not considered necessary in a book of travels to account for every half hour, and second, because I privately believed him to be in correspondence with the Senator the whole time, and hesitated to expose his duplicity. I had given poppa opportunities for confessing this clandestine business, but in his paternal wisdom he had not taken them. I was not prepared, therefore, to be very responsive when, from a mere desire to indulge his sense of the fitness of things, poppa endeavoured to probe my sentiments with regard to Mr. Page by moonlight on the Grand Canal. To begin with, I wasn't sure of them—so much depended upon what Arthur had been doing; and besides, I felt that the perfect confidence which should exist between father and daughter had already been a good deal damaged at the paternal end. So when poppa said that it must seem to me like a dream, so much had happened since the

day momma and I left Chicago at twenty-four hours' notice, six weeks ago, I said no, for my part I had felt pretty wide awake all the time; a person had to be, I ventured to add, with no more time to waste upon Southern Europe than we had.

"You mean you've been sleeping pretty badly," said the Senator sympathetically.

"Where was it," I inquired, "you would give us pounded crabs and cream for supper after we'd been to hear masses for the repose of somebody's soul? That was a bad night, but I don't think I've had any others. On the contrary."

"Oh, well," said poppa, "it's a good thing it isn't undermining your constitution," but he looked as if it were rather a disappointment.

"The American constitution can stand a lot of transportation," I remarked. "Railways live on that fact. I've heard you say so yourself, Senator."

Then there was an interval during which the oars of the gondoliers dipped musically, and the moon made a golden pathway to the marble steps of the Palazzo Contarina. Then poppa said, "I refer to the object of our tour."

"The object of our tour wasn't to undermine my constitution," I replied. "It was to write a book—don't you remember. But it's some time since you made any suggestions. If you don't look out, the author of that volume will practically be momma."

The Senator allowed himself to be diverted. "I

think," he said, "you'd better leave the chapter on Venice to me; you can't just talk anyhow about this city. I'll write it one of these nights before I go to bed.

"But the main reason," he continued, "that sent us to glide this minute over the canal system of the Bride of the Adriatic was the necessity of bracing you up after what you'd been through."

"Well," I said, "it's been very successful. I'm all braced up. I'm glad we have had such a good excuse for coming." A fib is sometimes necessary to one's self-respect.

"*Premé!*" cried the gondolier, and we shaved past the gondola of a solitary gentleman just leaving the steps of the Hotel Britannia.

"That was a shave!" poppa exclaimed, and added somewhat inconsequently, "You might just as well not speak so loud.

"I've always liked Arty," he continued, as we glided on.

"So have I," I returned cordially.

"He's in many ways a lovely fellow," said poppa.

"I guess he is," said I.

"I don't believe," ventured my parent, "that his matrimonial ideas have cooled down any."

"I hope he may marry well," I said. "Has he decided on Frankie Turner?"

"He has come to no decision that you don't know about. Of course, I have no desire to interfere where

it isn't any of my business, but if you wish to gratify your poppa, daughter, you will obey him in this matter, and permit Arthur once more to—to come round evenings as he used to. He is a young man of moderate income, but a very level head, and it is the wish of my heart to see you reconciled."

"Sorry I can't oblige you, poppa," I said. I certainly was not going to have any reconciliation effected by poppa.

"You'd better just consider it, daughter. I don't want to interfere—but you know my desire, my command."

"Senator," said I, "you don't seem to realise that it takes more than a gondola to make a paternal Doge. I've got to ask you to remember that I was born in Chicago. And it's my bed time. Gondolier! *Albergo! Andate presto!*"

"He seems to understand you," said poppa meekly.

So we dropped Arthur—dropped him, so to speak, into the Grand Canal, and I really felt callous at the time as to whether he should ever come up again.

But the Senator's joy in Venice found other means of expressing itself. One was an active and disinterested appeal to the gondoliers to be a little less modern in their costume. He approached this subject through the guide with every gondolier in turn, and the smiling impassiveness with which his suggestions were received still causes him wonder and disgust. "I presume," he remonstrated, "you think you earn your living because

tourists have got to get from the Accademia to St. Mark's, and from St. Mark's to the Bridge of Sighs, but that's only a quarter of the reason. The other three-quarters is because they like to be rowed there in gondolas by the gondoliers they've read about, and the gondoliers they've read about wore proper gondoliering clothes—they didn't look like East River loafers."

"They are poor men, these *gondolieri*," remarked the guide. "They cannot afford."

"I am not an infant, my friend. I'm a business man from Chicago. It's a business proposition. Put your gondoliers into the styles they wore when Andrea Dandolo went looting Constantinople, and you'll double your tourist traffic in five years. Twice as many people wanting gondolas, wanting guides, wanting hotel accommodation, buying your coloured glass and lace flounces—why, Great Scott! it would pay the city to do the thing at the public expense. Then you could pass a by-law forbidding gondoliering to be done in any style later than the fifteenth century. Pay you over and over again."

Poppa was in earnest, he wanted it done. He was only dissuaded from taking more active measures to make his idea public by the fact that he couldn't stay to put it through. He was told, of course, how the plain black gondola came to be enforced through the extravagance of the nobles who ruined themselves to have splendid ones, and how the Venetians scrupled to depart from a historic mandate, but he considered

this a feeble argument, probably perpetuated by somebody who enjoyed a monopoly in supplying Venice with black paint. "Circumstances alter cases," he declared. "If that old Doge knew that the P. and O. was going to run direct between Venice and Bombay every fortnight this year, he'd tell you to turn out your gondolas silver-gilt!"

Nevertheless, as I say, the Senator's views were coldly received, with one exception. A highly picturesque and intelligent gondolier, whom the guide sought to convert to a sense of the anachronism of his clothes in connection with his calling, promised that if we would give him a definite engagement for next day, he would appear suitably clad. The following morning he awaited us with honest pride in his Sunday apparel, which included violently checked trousers, a hard felt hat, and a large pink tie. The Senator paid him hurriedly and handsomely and dismissed him with as little injury to his feelings as was possible under the circumstances. "Tell him," said poppa to the guide, "to go home and take off those pants. And tell him, do you understand, to *rush!*"

That same day, in the afternoon, I remember, when we were disembarking for an ice at Florian's, momma directed our attention to two gentlemen in an approaching gondola. "There's something about that man," she said impressively, "I mean the one in the duster, that belongs to the reign of Louis Philippe."

"There is," I responded; "we saw him last in the

Petit Trianon. It's Mr. Pabbley and Mr. Hinkson. Two more Transatlantic fellow-travellers. Senator, when we meet them shall we greet them?"

The Senator had a moment of self-expostulation.

"Well, no," he said, "I guess not. I don't suppose we need feel obliged to keep up the acquaintance of *every* American we come across in Europe. It would take us all our time. But I'd like to ask him what use he finds for a duster in Venice.

"How I wish the Misses Bingham could hear you," I thought, but one should never annoy one's parents unnecessarily, so I kept my reflections to myself.

CHAPTER XX.

That last day in Venice we went, I remember, to the Lido. Nothing happened, but I don't like leaving it out, because it was the last day, and the next best thing to lingering in Venice is lingering on it. We went in a steamboat, under protest from poppa, who said it might as well be Coney Island until we got there, when he admitted points of difference, and agreed that if people had to come all the way out in gondolas, certain existing enterprises might as well go out of business. The steamer was full of Venetians, and we saw that they were charming, though momma wishes it to be understood that the modern Portia wears her bodice cut rather too low in the neck and gazes much too softly at the modern Bassanio. Poppa and I thought it mere amiability that scorned to conceal itself, but momma referred to it otherwise, admitting, however, that she found it fascinating to watch.

We seemed to disembark at a restaurant permanent among flowing waters, so prominent was this feature of the island, but it had only a roof, and presently we noticed a little grass and some bushes as well. The verdure had quite a novel look, and we decided to dis-

courage the casual person who wished to sell us strange and uncertified shell fish from a basket for immediate consumption, and follow it up.

Dicky was of opinion that we might arrive at the vegetable gardens of Venice, but in this we were disappointed. We came instead to a street-car, and half a mile of arbour, and all the Venetians pleasurably preparing to take carriage exercise. The horses seemed to like the idea of giving it to them, they were quite light-hearted, one of them actually pawed. They were the only horses in Venice, they felt their dignity and their responsibility in a way foreign to animals in the public service, anywhere else in the world. Personally we would have preferred to walk to the other end of the arbour, but it would have seemed a slight, and, as the Senator said, we weren't in Venice to hurt anybody's feelings that belonged there. It would have been extravagant too, since the steamboat ticket included the drive at the end. So we struggled anxiously for good places, and proceeded to the other side with much circumstance, enjoying ourselves as hard as possible. Dicky said he never had such a good time; but that was because he had exhausted Venice and his patience, and was going on to Verona next day.

The arbour and the grass and the street-car track ended sharply and all together at a raised wooden walk that led across the sand to a pavilion hanging over the Adriatic, and here we sat and watched other Venetians

disporting themselves in the water below. They were glorious creatures, and they disported themselves nobly, keeping so well in view of the pavilion and such a steady eye upon the spectators that poppa had an impulsive desire to feed them with macaroons. He decided not to; you never could tell, he said, what might be considered a liberty by foreigners; but he had a hard struggle with the temptation, the aquatic accomplishments we saw were so deserving of reward. I had the misfortune to lose a little pink rose overboard, as it were, and Dicky looked seriously annoyed when an amphibious young Venetian caught it between his lips. I don't know why; he was one of the most attractive on view, but I have often noticed Turkish tendencies in Dicky where his country-women are concerned. We came away almost immediately after, so that rose will bloom in my memory, until I forget about it, among romances that might have been.

Strolling back, we bought a Venetian secret for a sou or two, a beautiful little secret, I wonder who first found it out. A picturesque and fishy smelling person in a soft felt hat sold it to us—a pair of tiny dainty dried sea-horses, "*mère*" and "*père*" he called them. And there, all in the curving poise of their little heads and the twist of their little tails, was revealed half the art of Venice, and we saw how the first glass worker came to be told to make a sea green dragon climbing over an amber yellow bowl, and where the gondola borrowed its grace. They moved us to unanimous enthusi-

asm, and we utterly refused to let Dicky put one in his button-hole.

It is looking back upon Venice, too, that I see the paternal figure of the Senator nourishing the people with octopuses. This may seem improbable, but it is strictly true. They were small octopuses, not nearly large enough to kill anybody while they were alive, though boiled and pickled they looked very deadly. Pink in colour, they stood in a barrel near the entrance, I remember, of Jesurum's, and attracted the Senator's inquiring eye. When the guide said they were for human consumption poppa looked at him suspiciously and offered him one. He ate it with a promptness and artistic despatch that fascinated us all, gathering it up by its limp long legs and taking bites out of it, as if it were an apple. A one-eyed man who hooked pausing gondolas up to the slippery steps offered to show how it should be done, and other performers, all skilled, seemed to rise from the stones of the pavement. Poppa invited them all, by pantomime, to walk up and have an octopus, and when the crowd began to gather from the side alleys, and the enthusiasm grew too promiscuous, he bought the barrel outright and watched the carnival from the middle of the canal. He often speaks of his enjoyment of the Venetian octopus, eaten in cold blood, without pepper, salt, or vinegar; and the effect, when I am not there, is awe-stricken.

Next morning we took a gondola for the station, and slipped through the gold and opal silence of the dawn

on the canals away from Venice. No one was up but the sun, who did as he liked with the façades and the bridges in the water, and made strange lovelinesses in narrow darkling places, and showed us things in the *calli* that we did not know were in the world. The Senator was really depressing until he gradually lightened his spirits by working out a scheme for a direct line of steamships between Venice and New York, to be based on an agreement with the Venetian municipality as to garments of legitimate gaiety for the gondoliers, the re-nomination of an annual Doge, who should be compelled to wear his robes whenever he went out of doors, and the yearly resurrection of the ancient ceremony of marrying Venice to the Adriatic, during the months of July and August, when the tide of tourist traffic sets across the Atlantic. "We should get every school ma'am in the Union, to begin with," said poppa confidently, and by the time we reached Verona he had floated the company, launched the first ship, arrived in Venice with full orchestral accompaniment, and dined the imitation Doge—if he couldn't get Umberto and Crispi—upon clam chowder and canvas-backs to the solemn strains of Hail Columbia played up and down the Grand Canal. "If it *could* be worked," said poppa as we descended upon the platform, "I'd like to have the Pope telephone us a blessing on the banquet."

CHAPTER XXI.

It was the middle of the afternoon, and momma, having spent the morning among the tombs of the Scaligeri, was lying down. The Scaligeri somehow had got on her nerves; there were so many of them, and the panoply of their individual bones was so imposing.

"Daughter," she had said to me on the way back to the hotel, "if you point out another thing to me I'll slap you." In that frame of mind it was always best to let momma lie down. The Senator had letters to write; I think he wanted to communicate his Venetian steamship idea to a man in Minneapolis. Dicky had already been round to the Hotel di Londres—we were at the Colomba—and had found nothing, so when he asked me to come out for a walk I prepared to be steeped in despondency. An unsuccessful love affair is a severe test of friendship; but I went.

It was as I expected. Having secured a spectator to wreak his gloom upon, Mr. Dod proceeded to make the most of the opportunity. He put his hat on recklessly, and thrust his hands into his pa—his trouser pockets. We were in a strange town, but he fastened his eyes moodily upon the pavement, as if nothing else

were worth considering. As we strolled into the Piazza Bra, I saw him gradually and furtively turn up his coat-collar, at which I felt obliged to protest.

"Look here, Dicky," I said, "unrequited affection is, doubtless, very trying, but you're too much of an advertisement. The Veronese are beginning to stare at you; their sorcerers will presently follow you about with their patent philters. Reform your personal appearance, or here, at the foot of this statue of Victor Emmanuel, I leave you to your fate."

Dicky reformed it, but with an air of patience under persecution which I found hard to bear. "I don't know your authority for calling it unrequited," he said, with dignity.

"All right—undelivered," I replied. "That is a noble statue—you can't contradict the guide-book. By Borghi."

"Victor Emmanuel, is it? Then it isn't Garibaldi. You don't have to travel much in Italy to know it's got to be either one or the other. What they *like* is to have both," said Mr. Dod, with unnecessary bitterness. "I'd enjoy something fresh in statues myself." Then, with an imperfectly-concealed alertness, "There seems to be something going on over there," he added.

We could see nothing but an arched door in a high, curving wall, and a stream of people trickling in. "Probably only one of their eternal Latin church services," continued Dicky. "It's about the only form of public entertainment you can depend on in this country.

But we might as well have a look in." He went on to say, as we crossed the dusty road, that my unsympathetic attitude was enough to drive anybody to the Church of Rome, even in the middle of the afternoon.

But we perceived at once that it was not the Church of Rome, or any other church. There was more than one arched entrance, and a man in each, to whom people paid a lira apiece for admission, and when we followed them in we found our feet still upon the ground, and ourselves among a forest of solid buttresses and props. The number XV. was cut deep over the door we came in by, and the props had the air of centuries of patience. A wave of sound seemed to sweep round in a circle inside and spend itself about us, of faint multitudinous clappings. Conviction descended upon us suddenly, and as we stumbled after the others we shared one classic moment of anticipation, hurrying and curious in 1895 as the Romans hurried and were curious in 110, a little late for the show in the Arena. They were all there before us, they had taken the best places, and sat, as we emerged in our astonishment, tier above tier to the row where the wall stopped and the sky began, intent, enthusiastic. The wall threw a new moon of shadow on the west, and there the sun struck down sharply and made splendid the dyes in the women's clothes, and turned the Italian soldiers' buttons into flaming jewels. And again, as we stared, the applause went round and up, from the yellow sand below to the blue sky above,

and when we looked bewildered down into the Arena for the victorious gladiator, and saw a tumbling clown with a painted face instead, the illusion was only half destroyed. We climbed and struggled for better places, treading, I fear, in our absorption on a great many Veronese toes. Dicky said when we got them that you had to remember that the seats were Roman in order to appreciate them, they were such very cold stone, and they sloped from back to front, for the purpose, as we found out afterward from the guide-book, of letting off the rain water. We were glad to understand it, but Dicky declared that no explanation would induce him to take a season ticket for the Arena, it was too destitute of modern improvements. It was something, though, to sit there watching, with the ranged multitude, a show in a Roman Amphitheatre—one could imagine things, lictors and ædiles, senators and centurions. It only required the substitution of togas and girdled robes for trousers and petticoats, and a purple awning for the emperor, and a brass-plated body-guard with long spears and hairy arms and legs, and a few details like that. If one half closed one's eyes it was hardly necessary to imagine. I was half closing my eyes, and wondering whether they had Vestal Virgins at this particular amphitheatre, and trying to remember whether they would turn their thumbs up or down when they wished the clown to be destroyed, when Dicky grew suddenly pale and sprang to his feet.

"I was afraid it might give one a chill," I said,

"but it is very picturesque. I suppose the ancient Romans brought cushions."

Mr. Dod did not appear to hear me.

"In the third row below," he exclaimed, blushing joyfully, "the sixth from this end—do you see? Yellow bun under a floral hat—Isabel!"

"A yellow bun under a floral hat," I repeated, "that would be Isabel, if you add a good complexion and a look of deportment. Yes, now I see her. Mrs. Portheris on one side, Mr. Mafferton on the other. What do you want to do?"

"Assassinate Mafferton," said Dicky. "Does it look to you as if he had been getting there at all."

"So far as one can see from behind, I should say he has made some progress, but I don't think, Dicky, that he has arrived. He is constitutionally slow," I added, "about arriving."

At that moment the party rose. Without a word we, too, got on our feet and automatically followed, Dicky treading the reserved seats of the court of Berengarius as if they had been the back rows of a Bowery theatre. The classics were wholly obscured for him by a floral hat and a yellow bun. I, too, abandoned my speculations cheerfully, for I expected Mrs. Portheris, confronted with Dicky, to be more entertaining than any gladiator.

We came up with them at the exit, and that august lady, as we approached, to our astonishment, greeted us with effusion.



"Do you see?"

"We thought," she declared, "that we had lost you altogether. This is quite delightful. Now we *must* reunite!" Dicky was certainly included. It was extraordinary. "And your dear father and mother," went on Mrs. Portheris, "I am longing to hear their experiences since we parted. Where are you? The Colomba? Why what a coincidence! We are there, too! How small the world is!"

"Then you have only just arrived," said Mr. Dod to Miss Portheris, who had turned away her head, and was regarding the distant mountains.

"Yes."

"By the 11.30 P. M.?"

"No. By the 2.30 P. M."

"Had you a pleasant journey up from Naples?"

"It was rather dusty."

I saw that something quite awful was going on and conversed volubly with Mrs. Portheris and Mr. Mafferton to give Dicky a chance, but in a moment I, too, felt a refrigerating influence proceeding from the floral hat and the bun for which I could not account.

"Where have you been?" inquired Dicky, "if I may ask."

"At Vallombrosa."

There was also a parasol and it twisted indifferently.

"Ah—among the leaves! And were they as thick as William says they are?"

"I don't understand you." And, indeed, this levity

assorted incomprehensively with the black despair that sat on Dicky's countenance. It was really very painful in spite of Mrs. Portheris's unusual humanity and Mr. Mafferton's obvious though embarrassed joy, and as Mrs. Portheris's cab drove up at the moment I made a tentative attempt to bring the interview to a close. "Mr. Dod and I are walking," I said.

"Ah, these little strolls!" exclaimed Mrs. Portheris, with benignant humour. "I suppose we must condone them now!" and she waved her hand, rolling away, as if she gave us a British matron's blessing.

"Oh, don't!" I cried. "Don't condone them—you mustn't!" But my words fell short in a cloud of dust, and even Dicky, wrapped in his tragedy, failed to receive an impression from them.

"How," he demanded passionately, "do you account for it?"

"Account for what?" I shuffled.

"The size of her head—the frost—the whole bally conversation!" propounded Dicky, with tears in his eyes.

I have really a great deal of feeling, and I did not rebuke these terms. Besides, I could see only one way out of it, and I was occupied with the best terms in which to present it to Dicky. So I said I didn't know, and reflected.

"She isn't the same girl!" he groaned.

"Men are always talking in the funny columns of the newspapers," I remarked absently, "about how

much better they can throw a stone and sharpen a pencil than we can."

Mr. Dod looked injured. "Oh, well," he said, "if you prefer to talk about something else——"

"But they can't see into a sentimental situation any further than into a board fence," I continued serenely. "My dear Dick, Isabel thinks you're engaged. So does her mamma. So does Mr. Mafferton."

"Who to?" exclaimed Mr. Dod, in ungrammatical amazement.

"I looked at him reproachfully. "Don't be such an owl!" I said.

Light streamed in upon Dicky's mind. "To you!" he exclaimed. "Great Scott!"

"Preposterous, isn't it?" I said.

"I should ejaculate! Well, no, I mean—I shouldn't ejaculate, but—oh, you know what I mean——"

"I do," I said. "Don't apologise."

"What in my aunt's wardrobe do they think that for?"

"You left their party and joined ours rather abruptly at Pompeii," I said.

"Had to!"

"Isabel didn't know you had to. If she tried to find out, I fancy she was told little girls shouldn't ask questions. It was Lot's wife who really came between you, but Isabel wouldn't have been jealous of Lot's wife."

"I suppose not," said Dicky doubtfully.

"Do you remember meeting the Misses Bingham

in the Ufizzi? and telling them you were going to be——"

"That's so."

"You didn't give them enough details. And they told me they were going to Vallombrosa. And when Miss Cora said good-bye to me she told me you were a dear or something."

"Why didn't you say I wasn't?"

"Dicky, if you are going to assume that it was my fault——"

"Only one decent hotel—hardly anybody in it—foregathered with old lady Portheris—told every mortal thing they knew! Oh," groaned Dicky. "Why was an old maid ever born!"

"She never was," I couldn't help saying, but I might as well not have said it. Dicky was rapidly formulating his plan of action.

"I'll tell her straight out, after dinner," he concluded, "and her mother, too, if I get a chance."

"Do you know what will happen?" I asked.

"You never know what will happen," replied Dicky, blushing.

"Mrs. and Miss Portheris and Mr. Mafferton will leave the Hotel Colomba for parts unknown, by the earliest train to-morrow morning."

"But Mrs. Portheris declares that we're to be a happy family for the rest of the trip."

"Under the impression that you are disposed of, an impression that *might* be allowed to——"

"My heart," said Dicky impulsively, "may be otherwise engaged, but my alleged mind is yours for ever. Mamie, you have a great head."

"Thanks," I said. "I would certainly tell the truth to Isabel, as a secret, but——"

"Mamie, we cut our teeth on the same——"

"Horrid of you to refer to it."

"It's such a tremendous favour!"

"It is."

"But since you're in it, you know, already—and it's so very temporary—and I'll be as good as gold——"

"You'd better!" I exclaimed. And so it was settled that the fiction of Dicky's and my engagement should be permitted to continue to any extent that seemed necessary until Mr. Dod should be able to persuade Miss Portheris to fly with him across the Channel and be married at a Dover registry office. We arranged everything with great precision, and, if necessary, I was to fly too, to make it a little more proper. We were both somewhat doubtful about the necessity of a bridesmaid in a registry office, but we agreed that such a thing would go a long way towards persuading Isabel to enter it.

When we arrived at the hotel we found Mrs. Portheris and Mr. Mafferton affectionately having tea with my parents. Isabel had gone to bed with a headache, but Dicky, notwithstanding, displayed the most unfeeling spirits. He drove us all finally to see the tomb of Juliet in the Vicolo Franceschini, and it was before

that uninspiring stone trough full of visiting cards, behind a bowling green of suburban patronage, that I heard him, on general grounds of expediency, make contrite advances to Mrs. Portheris.

"I think I ought to tell you," he said, "that my views have undergone a change since I saw you."

Mrs. Portheris fixed her *pince nez* upon him in suspicious inquiry.

"I can even swallow the whale now," he faltered, "like Jonah."

CHAPTER XXII.

After two days of the most humid civility Mrs. Portheris had brought momma round. It was not an easy process, momma had such a way of fanning herself and regarding distant objects; and Dicky and I observed its difficulties with great satisfaction, for a family matter would be the last thing anybody would venture to discuss with momma under such circumstances, and we very much preferred that Mrs. Portheris's overflowing congratulations should be chilled off as long as possible. Dicky was for taking my parents into our confidence as a measure of preparation, but with poppa's commands upon me with regard to Arthur, I felt a delicacy as to the subject of engagements generally. Besides, one never can tell whether one's poppa and momma would back one up in a thing like that.

I never could quite understand Mrs. Portheris's increasingly good opinion of us at this point. The Senaton declared that it was because some American shares of hers had gone up in the market, but that struck momma and me as somewhat too general in its application. I preferred to attribute it to the Senator's Tariff Bill. Mr. Mafferton brought us the *Times* one evening

in Verona, and pointed out with solemn congratulation that the name of J. P. Wick was mentioned four times in the course of its leading article. That journal even said in effect that, if it were not for the faithfully sustained anti-humorous character which had established it for so many generations in the approbation of the British public, it would go so far as to call the contemplated measure "Wicked legislation." Mr. Mafferton could not understand why poppa had no desire to cut out the article. He said there was something so interesting about seeing one's name in print—he always did it. I was very curious to see instances of Mr. Mafferton's name in print, and finally induced him to show them to me. They were mainly advertisements for lost dogs—"Apply to the Hon. Charles Mafferton," and the reward was very considerable.

But this has nothing to do with the way the plot thickened on the Lake of Como. I was watching Bellagio slip past among the trees on the left shore and wondering whether we could hear the nightingales if it were not for the steamer's engines—which was particularly unlikely as it was the middle of the afternoon —and thinking about the trifles that would sometimes divide lives plainly intended to mingle. Mere enunciation, for example, was a thing one could so soon become reaccustomed to; already momma had ceased to congratulate me on my broad a's, and I could not help the inference that my conversation was again unobtrusively Chicagoan. It was frustrating, too, that I had no way



Fervent apologies.

of finding out how much poppa knew, and extremely irritating to think that he knew anything. He was sitting near me as I mused, immersed in the American mail, while momma and his Aunt Caroline insensibly glided towards intimacy again on two wicker chairs close by. Mr. Mafferton was counting the luggage somewhere; he was never happy on a steamer until he had done that; and Isabel was being fervently apologised to by Dicky on the other side of the deck. I hoped she was taking it in the proper spirit. I had the terms all ready in which *I* should accept an apology, if it were ever offered to me.

"Now, I must not put off any longer telling you how delighted I am at your dear Mamie's re-engagement."

The statement reached us all, though it was intended for momma only. Even Mrs. Portheris's more amiable accents had a quality which penetrated far, with a suggestion of whiskers. I looked again languidly at Bellagio, but not until I had observed a rapid glance between my parents, recommending each other not to be taken by surprise.

"Has she confided in you?" inquired momma.

"No—no. I heard it in a roundabout way. You must be very pleased, dear Augusta. Such an advantage that they have known each other all their lives!"

Poppa looked guardedly round at me, but by this time I was asleep in my camp chair, the air was so balmily cool after our hot rattle to Como.

"How *did* you hear?" he demanded, coming straight to the point, while momma struggled after tentative uncertainties.

"Oh, a little bird, a little bird—who had it from them both! And much better, I said when I heard it, that she should marry one of her own country-people. American girls nowadays will so often be content with nothing less than an Englishman!"

"So far as that goes," said the Senator crisply, "we never buy anything we haven't a use for, simply because it's cheap. But I don't mind telling you that my daughter's re-engagement, on the old American lines, is a thing I've been wanting to happen for some time."

"And there are some really excellent points about Mr. Dod. We must remember that he is still very young. He has plenty of time to repair his fortunes. Of one thing we may be sure," continued Mrs. Portheris magnanimously, "he will make her a very *kind* husband."

At this I opened my eyes inadvertently—nobody could help it—and saw the barometrical change in poppa's countenance. It went down twenty degrees with a run, and wore all the disgust of an hon. gentleman who has jumped to conclusions and found nothing to stand on.

"Oh, you're away off there, Aunt Caroline," he said with some annoyance. "Better sell your little bird and buy a telephone. Richard Dod is no more

engaged to our daughter than the man in the moon."

"Well, I should say not!" exclaimed momma.

"I have it on the *best* authority," insisted Mrs. Portheris blandly. "You American parents are so seldom consulted in these matters. Perhaps the young people have not told you."

This was a nasty one for both the family and the Republic, and I heard the Senator's rejoinder with satisfaction.

"We don't consider, in the United States, that we're the natural bullies of our children because we happen to be a little older than they are," he said, "but for all that we're not in the habit of hearing much news about them from outsiders. I'll have to get you to promise not to go spreading such nonsense around, Aunt Caroline."

"Oh, of course, if you say so, but I should be better satisfied if she denied it herself," said Mrs. Portheris with suavity. "My information was so very exact."

I had slumbered again, but it did not avail me. I heard the American mail dispersing itself about the deck in all directions as the Senator rose, strode towards my chair, and shook me much more vigorously than there was any necessity for.

"Here's Aunt Caroline," he said, "wanting us to believe that you and Dicky Dod are engaged—you two that have quarrelled as naturally as brother and sister

ever since you were born. I guess you can tell her whether it's very likely!"

I yawned, to gain time, but the widest yawn will not cover more than two seconds.

"What an extraordinary question!" I said. It sounds weak, but that was the way one felt.

"Don't prevaricate, Mamie, love," said Mrs. Portheris sternly.

"I'm not—I don't. But n-nothing of the kind is announced, is it?" I was growing nervous under the Senatorial eye.

"Nothing of the kind *exists*," said poppa, the Doge all over, except his umbrella. "Does it?"

"Why no," I said. "Dicky and I aren't engaged. But we have an understanding."

I was extremely sorry. Mrs. Portheris was so triumphant, and poppa allowed his irritation to get so much the better of him.

"Oh," he said, "you've got an understanding! Well, you've been too intelligent, darned if you haven't!" The Senator pulled his beard in his most uncompromising manner. "Now you can understand something more. I'm not going to have it. You haven't got my consent and you're not going to get it."

"But, my dear nephew, the match is so suitable in every respect! Surely you would not stand in the way of a daughter's happiness when both character and position—position in Chicago, of course, but still—are assured!"

Poppa paused, uncertain for an instant whether to turn his wrath upon his aunt, and that, of course, was my opportunity to plead with my angry parent. But the knowledge that the hopes which poppa was reducing to dust and ashes were fervently fixed on a floral hat and a yellow bun over which he had no control, on the other side of the ship, overcame me, and I looked at Bellagio to hide my emotions instead, in a way which they might interpret as obstinate, if they liked.

"Aunt Caroline," said the Senator firmly, "I'll thank you to keep your spoon out of the preserves. My daughter knows where I have given her hand, and that's the direction she's going with her feet. Mary, I may as well inform you that the details of your wedding are being arranged in Chicago this minute. It will take place within three weeks of our arrival, and it won't be any slump. But Richard Dod might as well be told right now that he won't be in it, unless in the capacity of usher. As I don't contemplate breaking up this party and making things disagreeable all round, you'll have to tell him yourself. We sail from Liverpool"—poppa looked at his watch—"precisely one week and four hours from now, and if Mr. Dod has not agreed to the conditions I mention by that time we will leave him upon the shore. That's all I have to say, and between now and then I don't expect you or anybody else to have the nerve to mention the matter to me again."

After that it was impossible to wink at poppa, or in any way to give him the assurance that my regard for

him was unimpaired. There are things that can't be passed over with a smile in one's poppa without doing him harm, and this was one of them. It was a regular manifesto, and I felt exactly like Lord Salisbury. I couldn't take him seriously, and yet I had to tell him to come on, if he wanted to, and devote his spare time to learning the language of diplomacy. So I merely bowed with what magnificence I could command and filed it, so to speak; and walked to the other side of the deck, leaving poppa to his conscience and momma and his Aunt Caroline. I left him with confidence, not knowing which would give him the worst time. Mrs. Portheris began it, before I was out of earshot. "For an American parent," she said blandly, "it strikes me, Joshua, that you are a little severe."

I found Mr. Mafferton interfering, as I expected, with Dicky and Isabel in their appreciation of the west shore. He was pointing out the Villa Carlotta at Caddenabbia, and explaining the beauties of the sculptures there and dwelling on the tone of blue in the immediate Alps and reminding them that the elder Pliny once picked wild flowers on these banks, and generally making himself the intelligent nuisance that nature intended him to be. In spite of it Isabel was radiant. She said a number of things with the greatest ease; one saw that language, after all, was not difficult to her, she only wanted practice and an untroubled mind. I looked at Dicky and saw that a weight had been removed from his, and it was impossible to avoid the conclusion that

peace and satisfaction in this life would date for these two, if all went well for the next few days, from the Lake of Como. But all could not be relied upon to go well so long as Mr. Mafferton hovered, quoting Claudian on the mulberry tree, upon the brink of a proposal, so I took him away to translate his quotation for me in the stern, which naturally suggested the past and its emotions. We could now refer quite sympathetically to the altogether irretrievable and gone by, and Mr. Mafferton was able to mention Lady Torquilan without any trace of his air that she was a person, poor dear, that brought embarrassment with her. Indeed, I sometimes thought he dragged her in. I asked him, in appropriate phrases, of course, whether he had decided to accept Mrs. Portheris's daughter, and he fixed mournful eyes upon me and said he thought he had, almost. The news of my engagement to Mr. Dod had apparently done much to bring him to a conclusion; he said it pointed so definitely to the unlikelihood of his ever being able to find a more stimulating companion than Miss Portheris, with all her charms, was likely to prove. It was difficult, of course, to see the connection, but I could not help confiding to Mr. Mafferton, as a secret, that there was hardly any chance of my union with Dicky —after what poppa had said. When I assured him that I had no intention whatever of disobeying my parent in a matter of which he was so much better qualified to be a judge than I, it was impossible not to see Mr. Mafferton's good opinion of me rising in his face. He

said he could not help sympathising with the paternal view, but that was all he *would* say; he refrained magnificently from abusing Dicky. And we parted mutually more deeply convinced than ever of the undesirability of doing anything rash in the all important direction we had been discussing.

As we disembarked at Colico to take the train for Chiavenna, Mrs. Portheris, after seeing that Mr. Mafferton was collecting the portmanteaux, gave me a word of comfort and of admonition. "Take my advice, my child," she said, "and be faithful to poor dear Richard. Your father must, in the end, give way. I shall keep at him in your interests. When you left us this afternoon," continued the lady mysteriously, "he immediately took out his fountain pen and wrote a letter. It was directed—I saw that much—to a Mr. Arthur Page. Is he the creature who is to be forced upon you, my child?" Mrs. Portheris in the sentimental view was really affecting.

"I think it very likely," I said calmly, "but I have promised to be faithful to Richard, Mrs. Portheris, and I will."

But I really felt a little nervous.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The instant we saw the diligence momma declared that if she had to sit anywhere but in the middle of it she would remain in Chiavenna until next day. Mrs. Portheris was of the same mind. She said that even the *intérieur* would be dangerous enough going down hill, but if the Senator would sit there too she would try not to be nervous. The *coupé* was terrifying—one saw everything the poor dear horses did—and as to the *banquette* she could imagine herself flying out of it, if we so much as went over a stone. As a party we were strangers to the diligence; we had all the curiosity and hesitation about it, as Dicky remarked, of the animals when Noah introduced them to the Ark. I asked Dicky to describe the diligence for the purpose of this volume, thinking that it might, here and there, have a reader who had never seen one, and he said that, as soon as he had made up his mind whether it was most like a triumphal chariot in a circus procession or a boudoir car in an ambulance, he would; but then his eyes wandered to Isabel, who was pinker than ever in the mountain air, and his reasoning faculties left him. A small German with a very red nose, most incoherent in his ap-

parel—he might have been a Baron or again a hairdresser—already occupied one of the seats in the *intérieur*, so after our elders had been safely deposited beside him the *banquette* and the *coupé* were left, as Mrs. Portheris said, to the adventurous young people. Dicky and I had conspired, for the sustained effect on Mrs. Portheris, to sit in the *banquette*, while Isabel was to suffer Mr. Mafferton in the *coupé*—an arrangement which her mother viewed with entire complacency. "After all," said Mrs. Portheris to momma, "we're not in Hyde Park—and young people will be young people." We had not counted, however, with the Senator, who suddenly realised, as Dicky was handing me up, that it was his business, in the capacity of Doge, to interfere. It is to his credit that he found it embarrassing, on account of his natural, almost paternal, dislike to make things unpleasant for Dicky. He assumed a sternly impenetrable expression, thought about it for a moment, and then approached Mr. Mafferton.

"I'd be obliged to you," he said, "if you could arrange, without putting yourself out any, to change places with young Dod, there, as far as St. Moritz. I have my reasons—but not necessarily for publication. See?"

Mr. Mafferton's eye glistened with appreciation of the confidence reposed in him. "I shall be most happy," he said, "if Dod doesn't mind." But Dicky, with indecent haste, was already in the *coupé*. "Don't mention it, Mafferton," he said out of the window. "I'm

delighted—at least—whatever the Senator says has got to be done, of course," and he made an attempt to look hurt that would not have imposed upon anybody but a self-constituted Doge with a guilty conscience. I took my bereavement in stony calm, with possibly just a suggestion about my eyebrows and under-lip that some day, on the far free shores of Lake Michigan, a down-trodden daughter would re-assert herself; poppa re-entered an *intérieur* darkened by a thunder-cloud on the brow of his Aunt Caroline; and we started.

It was some time before Mr. Mafferton interfered in the least with the Engadine. He seemed wrapped in a cloud of vain imaginings, sprung, obviously, from poppa's ill-considered request. I understood his emotions and carefully respected his silence. I was unwilling to be instructed about the Engadine either botanically or geologically—it was more agreeable not to know the names of the lovely little foreign flowers, and quite pleasant enough that every turn in the road showed us a white mountain or a purple one without having to understand what it was made of. Besides, I particularly did not wish to precipitate anything, and there are moments when a mere remark about the weather will do it. I had been suffering a good deal from my conscience since Mrs. Portheris had told me that poppa had written to Arthur—I didn't mind him enduring unnumbered pangs of hope deferred, but it was quite another thing that he should undergo the unnecessary martyrdom of imagining that he had been superseded by Dicky

Dod. On reflection, I thought it would be safer to start Mr. Mafferton on the usual lines, and I nerved myself to ask him whether he could tell me anything about the prehistoric appearance of these lovely mountains.

"I am glad," he responded absently, "that you admire my favourite Alps." Nothing more. I tried to prick him to the consideration of the scenery by asking him which were his favourite Alps, but this also came to nothing. Having acknowledged his approval of the Alps, he seemed willing to let them go unadorned by either fact or fancy. I offered him sandwiches, but he seemed to prefer his moustache. Presently he roused himself.

"I'm afraid you must think me very uninteresting, Miss Wick," he said.

"Dear me, no," I replied. "On the contrary, I think you are a lovely type."

"Type of an Englishman?" Mr. Mafferton was not displeased.

"Type of some Englishmen. You would not care to represent the—ah, commercial classes?"

"If I had been born in that station," replied Mr. Mafferton modestly, "I should be very glad to represent them. But I should *not* care to be a Labour candidate."

"It wouldn't be very appropriate, would it?" I suggested. "But do you ever mean to run for anything, really?"

"Certainly not," Mr. Mafferton replied, with slight

resentment. "In our family we never run. But, of course, I will succeed my uncle in the Upper House."

"Dear me!" I exclaimed. "So you will! I should think it would be simply lovely to be born a legislator. In our country it is attained by such painful degrees." It flashed upon me in a moment why Mr. Mafferton was so industrious in collecting general information. He was storing it up against the day when he would be able to make speeches, which nobody could interrupt, in the House of Lords.

The conversation flagged again, and I was driven to comment upon the appearance of the little German down in the *intérieur*. It was quite remarkable, apart from the bloom on his nose, his pale-blue eyes wandered so irresponsibly in their sockets, and his scanty, flaxen beard made such an unsuccessful effort to disguise the amiability of his chin. He wore a braided cotton coat to keep cool, and a woollen comforter to keep warm, and from time to time he smilingly invited the attention of the other three to vast green maps of the country, which I could see him apologising for spreading over Mrs. Portheris's capacious lap. It was interesting to watch his joyous sense of being in foreign society, and his determination to be agreeable even if he had to talk all the time. Now and then a sentence bubbled up over the noise of the wheels, as when he had the happiness to discover the nationalities of his fellow-travellers.

"Ach, is it so? From England, from America also,

and I from Markadorf am! Four peoples, to see zis so beautiful Switzerland from everyveres in one carriage we are come!" He smiled at them one after another in the innocent joy of this wonderful fact, and it made me quite unhappy to see how unresponsive they had grown.

"In America I haf one uncle got——"

"No, I don't know him," said the Senator, who was extremely tired of being expected to keep up with society in Castle Garden.

"But before I vas born going, mein uncle I myself haf never seen! To Chicago mit nossings he went, und now letters ve are always getting it is goot saying."

"Made money, has he?" poppa inquired, with indifference.

"Mit some small flours of large manufacture selling. Dose small flours—ze name forgotten I haf—ze breads making, ze cakes making, ze mädschen——"

"Baking powder!" divined momma.

"Bakings—powder! In America it is moch eat. So mine uncle Blittens——"

"Josef Blittens?" exclaimed poppa.

"Blittens und Josef also! The name of mine uncle to you is known! He is so rich, mit carriage, piano, large family—he is now famous also, hein? My goot uncle!"

"He's been my foreman for fifteen years," said poppa, "and I don't care where he came from; he's as good an American now as there is in the Union. I am

pleased to make the acquaintance of any member of his family. There's nothing in the way of refreshments to be got till we next change horses, but as soon as that happens, sir, I hope you will take something."

After that we began to rattle down the other side of the Julier and I lost the thread of the conversation, but I saw that Herr Blittens' determination to practise English was completely swamped in the Senator's desire to persuade him of the advantages of emigration.

"I never see a foreigner in his native land," said Mr. Mafferton, regarding this one with disapproval, "without thinking what a pity it is that any portion of the earth, so desirable for instance as this is, should belong to him." Which led me to suggest that when he entered political life in *his* native land Mr. Mafferton should aim at the Cabinet, he was obviously so well qualified to sustain British traditions.

My companion's mind seemed to be so completely diverted by this prospect that I breathed again. He could be depended upon I knew, never to think seriously of me when there was an opportunity of thinking seriously of himself, and in that certainty I relaxed my efforts to make it quite impossible that anything should happen. I forgot the contingencies of the situation in finding whiter glaciers and deeper gorges, and looking for the Bergamesque sheep and their shepherds which Baedeker assured us were to be seen pasturing on the slopes and heights of the Julier wearing long curling locks, mantles of brown wool, and peaked Calabrian

hats. We grew quite frivolous over this phenomenon, which did not appear, and it was only after some time that we observed the Baedeker to be of 1877, and decided that the home of truth was not in old editions. It seemed to me afterwards that Mr. Mafferton had been waiting for his opportunity; he certainly took advantage of a very insufficient one.

"It's exactly," said I, talking of the compartments of the diligence, "as if Isabel and Dicky had the first floor front, momma and poppa the dining room, and you and I the second floor back."

It was one of those things that one lives to repent if one survives them five seconds; but my remorse was immediately swallowed up in consequences. I do not propose to go into the details of Mr. Mafferton's second attempt upon my insignificant hand—to be precise, I wear fives and a quarter—but he began by saying that he thought we could do better than that, meaning the second floor back, and he mentioned Park Lane. He also said that ever since Dicky, doubtless before his affections had become involved, had told him that there was a possibility of my changing my mind—I was nearly false to Dicky at this point—he had been giving the matter his best consideration, and he had finally decided that it was only fair that I should have an opportunity of doing so. These were not his exact words, but I can be quite sure of my impression. We were trotting past the lake at Maloja when this came upon me, and when I reflected that I owed it about equally

to poppa and to Dicky Dod I felt that I could have personally chastised them—could have slapped them —both. What I longed to do with Mr. Mafferton was to hurl him, figuratively speaking, down an abyss, but that would have been to send him into Mrs. Portheris's beckoning arms next morning, and I had little faith in any floral hat and pink bun once its mamma's commands were laid upon it. I thought of my cradle companion —not tenderly, I confess—and told Mr. Mafferton that I didn't know what I had done to deserve such an honour a second time, and asked him if he had properly considered the effect on Isabel. I added that I fancied Dicky was generalising about American girls changing their minds, but I would try and see if I had changed mine and would let him know in six days, at Harwich. Any decision made on this side of the Channel might so easily be upset. And this I did knowing quite well that Dicky and Isabel and I were all to elope from Boulogne, Dicky and Isabel for frivolity and I for propriety; for this had been arranged. In writing a description of our English tour I do not wish to exculpate myself in any particular.

We arrived late at St. Moritz, and the little German, on a very fraternal footing, was still talking as the party descended from the *intérieur*. He spoke of the butterflies the day before in Pontresina, and he laughed with delight as he recounted.

"Vorty maybe der vas, vifty der vas, mit der diligence vlying along; und der brittiest of all I catch; he *vill* come at my nose"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Leaving out the scenery—the Senator declares that nothing spoils a book of travels like scenery—the impressions of St. Moritz which remain with me have something of the quality, for me, of the illustrations in a French novel. I like to consult them; they are so crisp and daintily defined and isolated and individual. Yet I can only write about an upper class German mamma eating brodchen and honey with three fair square daughters, young, younger, youngest, and not a flaxen hair mislaid among them, and the intelligent accuracy with which they looked out of the window and said that it was a horse, the horse was lame, and it was a pity to drive a lame horse. Or about the two American ladies from the south, creeping, wrapped up in sealskins, along the still white road from the Hof to the Bad, and saying one to the other, "Isn't it nice to feel the sun on yo' back?" Or about the curio shops on the ridge where the politest little Frenchwomen endeavour to persuade you that you have come to the very top of the Engadine for the purpose of buying Japanese candlesticks and Italian scarves to carry down again.

It was all so clear and sharp and still at St. Moritz; everything drew a double significance from its height and its loneliness. But, as poppa says, a great deal of trouble would be saved if people who feel that they can't describe things would be willing to consider the alternative of leaving them alone; and I will only dwell on St. Moritz long enough to say that it nearly shattered one of Mr. Mafferton's most cherished principles. Never in his life before, he said, had he felt inclined to take warm water in his bath in the morning. He made a note of the temperature of his tub to send to the *Times*. "You never can tell," he said, "the effect these little things may have." I was beginning to be accustomed to the effect they had on me.

Before we got to Coire the cool rushing night had come and the glaciers had blotted themselves out. I find a mere note against Coire to the effect that it often rains when you arrive there, and also that it is a place in which you may count on sleeping particularly sound if you come by diligence; but there is no reason why I should not mention that it was under the sway of the Dukes of Swabia until 1268, as momma wishes me to do so. We took the train there for Constance, and between Coire and Constance, on the Bodensee, occurred Rorshach and Romanshorn; but we didn't get out, and, as momma says, there was nothing in the least individual about their railway stations. We went on that Bodensee, however, I remember with animosity, taking a small steamer at Constance for Neuhausen. It was

a gray and sulky Bodensee, full of little dull waves and a cold head wind that never changed its mind for a moment. Isabel and I huddled together for comfort on the very hard wooden seat that ran round the deck, and the depth of our misery may be gathered from the fact that, when the wind caught Isabel's floral hat under the brim and cast it suddenly into that body of water, neither of us looked round! Mrs. Portheris was very much annoyed at our unhappy indifference. She implied that it was precisely to enable Isabel to stop a steamer on the Bodensee in an emergency of this sort that she had had her taught German. Dicky told me privately that if it had happened a week before he would have gone overboard in pursuit, for the sake of business, without hesitation, but, under the present happy circumstances, he preferred the prospect of buying a new hat. Nothing else actually transpired during the afternoon, though there were times when other events seemed as precipitant, to most of us, as upon the tossing Atlantic, and we made port without having realised anything about the Bodensee, except that we would rather not be on it.

Neuhausen was the port, but Schaffhausen was of course the place, two or three dusty miles along a river the identity of which revealed itself to Mrs. Portheris through the hotel omnibus windows as an inspiration. "Do we all fully understand," she demanded, "that we are looking upon the Rhine?" And we endeavoured to do so, though the Senator said that if it were not so

intimately connected with the lake we had just been delivered from he would have felt more cordial about it. I should like to have it understood that relations were hardly what might be called strained at this time between the Senator and myself. There were subjects which we avoided, and we had enough regard for our dignity, respectively, not to drop into personalities whatever we did, but we had a *modus vivendi*, we got along. Dicky maintained a noble and pained reserve, giving poppa hours of thought, out of which he emerged with the almost visible reflection that a Wick never changed his mind.

There was a garden with funny little flowers in it which went out of fashion in America about twenty years ago. There was also a *châlet* in the garden, where we saw at once that we could buy cuckoo clocks and edelweiss and German lace if we wanted to. There was a big hotel full of people speaking strange languages—by this time we all sympathised with Mr. Mafferton in his resentment of foreigners in Continental hotels; as he said, one expected them to do their travelling in England. There were the "Laufen" foaming down the valley under the dining room windows, there were the Swiss waitresses in short petticoats and velvet bodices and white chemisettes, and at the dinner table, sitting precisely opposite, there were the Malts. Mr. Malt, Mrs. Malt, Emmeline Malt, and Miss Callis, not one of them missing. The Malts whom we had left at Rome, left in the same hotel with Count Filgiatti, and to some purpose

apparently, for seated attentively next to Mrs. Malt there also was that diminutive nobleman.

As a family we saw at a glance that America was not likely to be the poorer by one Count in spite of the way we had behaved to him. Miss Callis, with four thousand dollars a year of her own, was going to offer them up to sustain the traditions of her country. A Count, if she could help it, should not go a-begging more than twice. Further impressions were lost in the shock of greeting, but it recurred to me instantly to wonder whether Miss Callis had really gone into the question of keeping a Count on that income, whether she would be able to give him all the luxuries he had been brought up in anticipation of. It was interesting to observe the slight embarrassment with which Count Filgiatti re-encountered his earlier American vision, and his re-assurance when I gave him the bow of the most travelling of acquaintances. Nothing was further from my thoughts than interfering. When I considered the number of engagements upon my hands already, it made me quite faint to contemplate even an *arrangimento* in addition to them.

We told the Malts where we had been and they told us where they had been as well as we could across the table without seeming too confidential, and after dinner Emmeline led the way to the enclosed verandah which commanded the Falls. "Come along, ladies and gentlemen," said Emmeline, "and see the great big old Schaffhausen Fraud. Performance begins at nine o'clock ex-

actly, and no reserve seats, so unless you want to get left, Mrs. Portheris, you'd better put a hustle on."

Miss Malt had gone through several processes of annihilation at Mrs. Portheris's hands, and had always come out of them so much livelier than ever, that our Aunt Caroline had abandoned her to America some time previously.

"Emmeline!" exclaimed Mrs. Malt, "you are *too* personal.

"She ought to be sent to the children's table," Mrs. Portheris remarked severely.

"Oh, that's all right, Mrs. Portheris. I don't like milk puddings—they give you a double chin. I expect you've eaten a lot of 'em in your time, haven't you, Mis' Portheris? Now, Mr. Mafferton, you sit here, and you, Mis' Wick, you sit *here*. That's right, Mr. Wick, you hold up the wall. I ain't proud, I'll sit on the floor —there now, we're every one fixed. No, Mr. Dod, none of us ladies object to smoking—Mis' Portheris smokes herself, don't you, Mis' Portheris?"

"Emmeline, if you pass another remark to bed you go!" exclaimed her mother with unction.

"I was fourteen the day before yesterday, and you don't send people of fourteen to bed. I got a town lot for a birthday present. Oh, there's the French gentleman! *Bon soir, Monsieur! Comment va-t-il! Attendez!*" and we were suddenly bereft of Emmeline.

"She's gone to play poker with that man from Mar-

seilles," remarked Mrs. Malt. "Really, husband, I don't know——"

"You able to put a limit on the game?" asked poppa.

Everybody laughed, and Mr. Malt said that it wasn't possible for Emmeline to play for money because she never could keep as much as five francs in her possession, but if she *did* he'd think it necessary to warn the man from Marseilles that Miss Malt knew the game.

"And she's perfectly right," continued her father, "in describing this illumination business as a fraud. I don't say it isn't pretty enough, but it's a fraud this way, they don't give you any choice about paying your money for it. Now we didn't start boarding at this hotel, we went to the one down there on the other side of the river. We were very much fatigued when we arrived, and every member of our party went straight to bed. Next day—I always call for my bills daily—what do I find in my account but '*Illumination de la chute de la Rhin*' one franc apiece."

"And you hadn't ordered anything of the kind," said poppa.

"Ordered it? I hadn't even seen it! Well, I didn't lose my temper. I took the document down to the office and asked to have it explained to me. The explanation was that it cost the hotel a large sum of money. I said I guessed it did, and it was also probably expensive to get hot and cold water laid on, but I didn't see any mention of that in the bill, though I

used the hot and cold water, and didn't use the illumination."

"That's so," said poppa.

"Well, then the fellow said it was done all on my account, or words to that effect, and that it was a beautiful illumination and worth twice the money, and as it was the rule of the hotel he'd have to trouble me for the price of it."

"Did you oblige him?" asked poppa.

"Yes, I did. I hated to awfully, but you never can tell where the law will land you in a foreign country, especially when you can't converse with the judge, and I don't expect any stranger could get justice in Schaffhausen against an hotel anyway. But I sent for my party's trunks, and we moved—down there to that little thing like a castle overhanging the Falls. It was a castle once, I believe, but it's a deception now, for they've turned it into an hotel."

"Find it comfortable there?" inquired the Senator.

"Well, I'm telling you. Pretty comfortable. You could sit in the garden and get as wet as you liked from the spray, and no extra charge; and if you wanted to eat apricots at the same time they only cost you a franc apiece. So when I saw how moderate they were every way, I didn't think I'd have any trouble about the illumination, specially as I heard that the three hotels which compose Schaffhausen subscribed to run the electric plant, and I'd already helped one hotel with its subscription."

"When did you move in here?" asked poppa.

"I am coming to that. Well, I saw the show that night. I happened to be on an outside balcony when it came off, and I couldn't help seeing it. I wouldn't let myself out so far as to enjoy it, for fear it might prejudice me later, but I certainly looked on. You can't keep your eyes shut for three-quarters of an hour for the sake of a principle valued at a franc a head."

"I expect you had to pay," said poppa.

"You're so impatient. I looked coldly on, and between the different coloured acts I made a calculation of the amount the hotel opposite was losing by its extortion. I took considerable satisfaction in doing it. You can get excited over a little thing like that just as much as if it were the entire Monroe Doctrine; and I couldn't sleep, hardly, that night for thinking of the things I'd say to the hotel clerk if the illumination item decorated the bill next day. Cut myself shaving in the morning over it—thing I never do. Well, there it was —'*Illumination de la chute de la Rhin*,' same old French story, a franc apiece."

"I thought, somehow, from what you've been saying, that it *would* be there," remarked the Senator patiently.

"Well, sir, I tried to control myself, but I guess the clerk would tell you I was pretty wild. There wasn't an argument I didn't use. I threw as many lights on the situation as they did on the Falls. I asked him how it would be if a person preferred his Falls plain? I told

him I paid him board and lodging for what Schaffhausen could show me, not for what I could show Schaffhausen. I used the words 'pillage,' 'outrage,' and other unmistakable terms, and I spoke of communicating the matter to the American Consul at Berne."

"And after that?" inquired the Senator.

"Oh, it wasn't any use. After that I paid, and moved. Moved right up here, this morning. But I thought about it a good deal on the way, and concluded that, if I wasn't prepared to sample every hotel within ten miles of this cataract for the sake of not being imposed upon, I'd have to take up a different attitude. So I walked up to the manager the minute we arrived, fierce as an Englishman—beg your pardon, Squire Mafferton, but the British *have* a ferocious way with hotel managers, as a rule. I didn't mean anything personal—and said to him exactly as if it was my hotel, and he was merely stopping in it, 'Sir,' I said, 'I understand that the guests of this hotel are allowed to subscribe to an electric illumination of the Falls of the Rhine. You may put me down for ten francs. Now I'm prepared, for the first time, to appreciate the evening's entertainment."

Shortly after the recital of Mr. Malt's experiences the illumination began, and we realised what it was to drink coffee in fairyland. Poppa advises me, however, to attempt no description of the Falls of Schaffhausen by any light, because "there," he says, "you will come into competition with Ruskin." The Senator is per-

fectly satisfied with Ruskin's description of the Falls; he says he doesn't believe much could be added to it. Though he himself was somewhat depressed by them, he found that he liked them so much better than Niagara. I heard him myself tell five different Alpine climbers, in precise figures, how much more water went over our own cataract.

It was discovered that evening that Mr. and Mrs. Malt, and Emmeline, and Miss Callis and the Count were going on to Heidelberg and down the Rhine by precisely the same train and steamer that we had ourselves selected. Mrs. Malt was looking forward to the ruins on the embattled Rhine with all the enthusiasm we had expended upon Venice, but Mr. Malt declared himself so full of the picturesque already that he didn't know how he was going to hold another castle.

CHAPTER XXV.

We were on our way from Basle to Heidelberg, I remember, and Mr. Malt was commenting sarcastically upon Swiss resources for naming towns as exemplified in "Neuhausen." "There's a lot about this country," said Mr. Malt, "that reminds you of the world as it appeared about the time you built it for yourself every day with blocks, and made it lively with animals out of your Noah's Ark. I can't say what it is, but that's a sample of it—'New Houses!' What a baby baa-lamb name for a town! It would settle the municipality in our part of the world—any railway would make a circuit of fifty miles to avoid it!"

Mr. Mafferton and I had paused in our conversation, and these remarks reached us in full. They gave him the opportunity of bending a sympathetic glance upon me and saying, "How graphic your countrymen are, Miss Wick." Cologne was only three days off, but Mr. Mafferton never departed from the proprieties in his form of address. He was in that respect quite the most docile and respectful person I have ever found it necessary to keep in suspense.

I said they were not all as pictorial as Mr. Malt, and

noticed that his eye was wandering. It had wandered to Miss Callis, who was snubbing the Count, and looking wonderfully well. I don't know whether I have mentioned that she had blue eyes and black hair, but her occupation, of course, would be becoming to anybody.

"And for the matter of that your countrywomen, too," said Mr. Mafferton. "I am much gratified to have the opportunity of making the acquaintance of another of them in this unexpected way. I find your friend, Miss Callis, a charming creature."

She wasn't my friend, but the moment did not seem opportune for saying so.

"I saw you talking a good deal to her yesterday," I said.

Mr. Mafferton twisted his moustache with a look of guilty satisfaction which I found hard to bear. "Must I cry *Peccavi?*" he said. "You see you were so—er—preoccupied. You said you would rather hear about the growth of the Swiss Confederacy and its relation to the Helvetia of the Ancients another day."

"That was quite true," I said indignantly.

"I found Miss Callis anxious to be informed without delay," said Mr. Mafferton, with a slightly rebuking accent. "She has a very open mind," he went on musingly.

"Oh, wonderfully," I said.

"And a highly retentive memory. It seems she was shown over our place in Surrey last summer. She

described it to me in the most perfect detail. She must be very observant."

"She's as observant as ever she can be," I remarked. "I expect she could describe you in the most perfect detail too, if she tried." I sweetened this with an exterior smile, but I felt extremely rude inside.

"Oh, I fear I could not flatter myself—but how interesting that would be! One has always had a desire to know the impression one makes as a whole, so to speak, upon a fresh and unsophisticated young intelligence like that."

"Well," I said, "there isn't any reason why you shouldn't find out at once." For the Count had melted away, and Miss Callis was not nearly so much occupied with her novel as she appeared to be.

Mr. Mafferton rose, and again stroked his moustache, with a quizzical disciplinary air.

> "Oh woman, in your hours of ease
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please!"

he quoted. "You are a very whimsical young lady, but since you send me away I must abandon you."

"Thanks so much!" I said. "I mean—I have myself to blame, I know," and as Mr. Mafferton dropped into the seat opposite Miss Callis I saw Mrs. Portheris regard him austerely, as one for whom it was possible to make too much allowance.

In connection with Heidelberg I wish there were something authentic to say about Perkeo; but nobody would believe the quantity of wine he is supposed to

have drunk in a day, which is the statement oftenest made about him, so it is of no consequence that I have forgotten the number of bottles. He isn't the patron saint of Heidelberg, because he only lived about a hundred and fifty years ago, and the first qualification for a patron saint is antiquity. As poppa says, there may be elderly gentlemen in Heidelberg now whose grandfathers have warned them against the personal habits of Perkeo from actual observation. Also we know that he was a court jester, and the pages of the Calendar, for some reason, are closed to persons in that walk of life. Judging by the evidences of his popularity that survive on all sides, Mr. Malt declared that he was probably worth more to the town in attracting residents and investors than half-a-dozen patron saints, and in this there may have been more truth than reverence. The Elector Charles Philip, whose court he jested for, certainly made no such mark upon his town and time as Perkeo did, and in that, perhaps, there is a moral for sovereigns, although the Senator advises me not to dwell upon it. At all events, one writes of Heidelberg but one thinks of Perkeo, as he swings from the sign-boards of the Haupt-Strasse, and stands on the lids of the beer mugs, and smiles from the extra-mural decoration of the wine shops, and lifts his glass, in eternally good wooden fellowship, beside the big Tun in the Castle cellar. There is a Hotel Perkeo, there must be Clubs Perkeo, probably a suburb and steamboats of the same name, and the local oath "Per Perkeo!" has a harmless sound,

but nothing could be more binding in Heidelberg. Momma thought his example a very unfortunate one for a University town, but the rest of us were inclined to admire Perkeo as a self-made man and a success. As Dicky protested he had made the fullest use of the capacities Nature had given him, it was evident from his figure that he had even developed them, and what more profitable course should the German youth follow? He was cheerful everywhere—as the forerunner of the comic paper one supposes he had to be—but most impressive in his effigy by his master's wine vat, in the perpetual aroma that most inspired him, where, by a mechanical arrangement inside him, he still makes a joke of sorts, in somewhat graceless aspersion of the methods of the professional humorists. Emmeline found him very like her father, and confided her impression to Mrs. Malt. "But of course," she added condoningly, "poppa was different when you married him."

Perkeo was not so sentimental as the Trumpeter of Sakkingen, and the Trumpeter of Sakkingen was not so sentimental as the Heidelberg University student. The Heidelberg University student was as a rule very round and very young, and he seemed to give up the whole of his spare time to imitating the passion which I hope has not been permitted to enter too largely into this book of travels.

Dicky and I agreed that it was a mere imitation; that is, Dicky said it was and I agreed. It could not possibly amount to anything more, for it consisted

wholly in walking up and down in front of the house in which its object lived. We saw it being done, and it looked so uninteresting that we failed to realise what it meant until we inquired. Mrs. Portheris's nephew, Mr. Jarvis Portheris, who was acquiring German in Heidelberg, told us about it. Mrs. Portheris's nephew was just fourteen and small of his age, but he, too, had selected the lady of his admiration, and was taking regular daily pedestrian exercise in front of her residence. He pointed out the residence, and observed with an enormous frown that "another man" had usurped the pavement in his absence, and was doing it in quick step doubtless to show his ardour. "He's a beastly German too," said Mrs. Portheris's nephew, "so I can't challenge him, but I'll jolly well punch his head."

"Come on," said Dicky, "you'd better steady your nerves," and treated him liberally to ginger-beer and currant buns; but we were not allowed to see the encounter, which Mr. Jarvis Portheris, gratefully satiate, assured us must be conducted on strict lines of etiquette, with formal preliminaries. He was so very young, and obviously knew so little about what he was doing, that we questioned him with some delicacy, but we discovered that the practice had no parallel, as Dicky put it, for lack of incident. It was accompanied in some cases by the writing of poetry, "German poetry, of course," said Mrs. Portheris's nephew ineffably, but even that was more likely to be exhibited as evidence of the writer's fervid state of mind than to be sent to its object, who

plaited her hair and attended to her domestic duties as if nobody were in the street but the fishmonger. In Mr. Jarvis Portheris's case he did not know the colour of her eyes, or the number of her years; he had selected her, it seemed, at a venture, in church, from a rear view, sitting; and had never seen her since. Dicky, whose predilections of this sort have always been very active, asked him seriously why he adhered to such a hollow mockery, and he said regretfully that a fellow more or less had to; it was one of the beastly nuisances of being educated abroad. But from what we saw of the German temperament generally we were convinced that as a native demonstration it was sincere, and that its idiocy arose only, as Dicky expressed it, from the remarkable lack in foreigners of business capacity.

We all congratulated ourselves on seeing Heidelberg while the University was in session, and we could observe the large fat students in flat blue and pink and green club caps, swaggering about the town accompanied by dogs of almost equal importance. The largest and fattest, I thought, wore white caps, and, though Mr. Jarvis Portheris said that white was the most aristocratic club's colour, they looked remarkably like bakers. The Senator had an object in Heidelberg, as he had in so many places, and that object was to investigate the practice of duelling, which everybody understands to prevail to a deadly extent among the students. It was plain from their appearance that personal assault at all events was regrettably common, for nearly everyone of them

wore traces of it in their faces, wore them as if they were particularly becoming. Every variety of scar that could well be imagined was represented, some healed, some healing, and some freshly gory. The youth with the most scars, we observed, gave himself the most airs, and the really vainglorious were, more or less, obscured in cotton-wool, evidently just from the hands of the surgeon. The Senator examined them individually as they passed, with an inquisitiveness which they plainly enjoyed, and was much impressed with their fighting qualities as a race, until Mr. Jarvis Portheris happened to explain that the scars were very carefully given and received with an almost exclusive view to personal adornment. Mr. Mafferton appeared to have known this before; but that was an irritating way he had—none of the rest of us did. The Senator regarded the next youth he met, who had elongated his mouth to run up into his ear without adding in the least to his charms of appearance, with barely disguised contempt, and when Mr. Jarvis Portheris proceeded to explain how the doctors pulled open the cuts if they promised to heal without leaving any sign of valour, poppa's impatience with the noble army of duellists grew so great that he could hardly remain in Heidelberg till the train was ready to take him away.

"But don't they ever by *accident* do themselves any harm?" inquired my disappointed parent.

"There's one case on record," said Mr. Jarvis Portheris, "and everybody here says it's true. One fellow

that was fighting happened to have a dog, and the dog was allowed in. Well, the other fellow, by accident, sliced off the end of the fellow that had the dog's nose —I don't mean the dog's nose, you know, but the fellow's. That was going a bit far, you know; they don't generally go so far. Well, the doctor said that would be all right, they could easily make it grow on again; but when they looked for the nose—*the dog had eaten it!* They never allow dogs in now."

It was a simple little story, and it bore marks of unmistakable age and many aliases, but it did much to reconcile the Senator to the University student of Heidelberg, and especially to his dog.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Emmeline had childlike lapses; she rejoiced greatly, for instance, at seeing a Strasbourg stork. She confessed, when she saw it, to having read Hans Andersen when she was a little girl, and was happy in the resemblance of the tall chimneys he stood on, and the high-pitched red roofs he surveyed, to the pictures she remembered. But, for that matter, so were we all. We had an hour and a half at Strasbourg, and we drove, of course, to the Cathedral; but it was the stork that we saw, and that each of us privately considered the really valuable impression. He stood beside his nest with his chin sunk in his neck, looking immensely lucky and wise, and one quite agreed with Emmeline that it must be lovely to live under him.

We lunched at the station, and, as the meal progressed, saw again how widespread and sincere is the German sentiment to which I alluded, perhaps too lightly, in the last chapter. Our waitresses were all that could be desired, until there came between us and them a youth from parts without. He was sallow, and the waitresses were buxom; he might have been a student of law or medicine, they were naturally of much lower

degree. But they frankly forsook us and sat down beside him in terms of devotion and an open aspect of radiant happiness. When one went to draw his lager beer he put an unrepelled arm round the waist of the other, and when the first came back he chucked her under the chin with undisguised affection, the while we looked on and starved, none knowing the language except Isabel, who thought of nothing but blushing. As Mr. Malt said, if the young man could only have made up his mind, we might have been able to get along with the rejected one; but, apparently, he was not in the least embarrassed by numbers, sending a large and beguiling smile to yet a further hand-maiden, who passed enviously through the *speise-salle* with a basin of soup. It was only when Dicky stalked across to the old woman who sold sausages and biscuits behind a counter, and pointed indignantly to the person who held all the available table service of the Strasbourg railway station on his knees, that we obtained redress. The old woman laughed as if it were amusing, and called the maidens shrilly; but even then they came with reluctance, as if we had been mere schnapps instead of ten complete luncheons, one soup, and a bread and cheese, as Dicky said. The bread and cheese was the Count, and one gathered from it that the improvement in his immediate prospects was not yet assured, that the arrangimento was still in futuro.

We had become such a large party, that it is impossible to relate the whole of our experiences even in the

half hour during which we dawdled round the Strasbourg waiting-room until the train should start. I know it was then, for instance, that Mrs. Portheris took Dicky aside and told him how deeply she sympathised with him in his trying position, and bade him only be faithful to the dictates of his own heart and all would come right in time. I know Dicky promised faithfully to do so, but I must not dwell upon it. Nor is the opportunity adequate to express the indignation we all felt, and not Mr. Mafferton merely, at the insufficient personal impression we made upon the German railway officials. They were so completely preoccupied with their magnificent selves and their vast business that they were unable even to look at us when we asked them questions, and their sole conception of a reply was an order, in terms that sounded brutal to a degree. They were objectionably burly and red in the face; they wore an offensive number of buttons and straps upon their uniforms. As Mr. Mafferton said, they utterly misconceived their position in life, attempting to Kaiser the travelling public by Divine right instead of recognising themselves as humble servants, buttoned only to be made more agreeable to the eye.

One such person trampled upon us to such an extent that I have never been able to satisfy myself that the Senator was sincere in making his little mistake. We were sitting in dejected rows, with a number of other foreigners who had been similarly reduced, when this official entered the waiting-room, advanced to the mid-

dle of it, posed with great majesty, and emitted several bars of a kind of chant or chime. It was delivered with too much vigour, and it stopped too abruptly, to be entirely enjoyable; but there was no doubt about the musical intention. It was not even intoning; it was singing, beginning with moderation, going on stronger with indignation, and ending suddenly in a crescendo of denunciation.

We smiled in difficult self-restraint as he went away, and Dicky remarked that he supposed we were in their hands, we couldn't object to anything they did to us. In five minutes he came back to exactly the same spot and sang again the same words, in the same key, with the same unction. "Encore!" exclaimed Mr. Malt boldly, but cowered under the glare that was turned upon him, and utterly fell away when we reminded him of the punishments attached in Germany to the charge of *lèse majesté*. Precisely five minutes more passed away, and Bawlinbuttons, as Miss Callis called him, entered again. Then occurred the Senator's little mistake. In the midst of the second bar, the indignant one, Bawlinbuttons stopped short, petrified by poppa, who had advanced and was holding out copper coins whose usefulness we had left behind us, to the value of about fifteen cents.

"Here's the collection," said poppa benevolently—for an instant or two he was quite audible—"but unless you know some other tune the company wish me to say that they won't trouble you any further."

There are misunderstandings that are never rectified, sometimes because a train draws up at the platform as in this case, and sometimes for other reasons, and it was natural enough that poppa should fail to comprehend Bawlinbuttons' indignant shouts to the effect that a Kaiser should never be mistaken for an organ-grinder, merely because his tastes are musical. Neither is it likely that the various Teutons who were waiting for the information will ever understand why the announcement that the train for Saarburg, Nancy, Frankfort, and Mayence would leave at ten o'clock precisely was never completed for the third time, according to the regulation. But we have often wondered since what Bawlinbuttons did with the coppers.

We divided up on the way to Mayence, and Mr. and Mrs. Malt came into the compartment with the Senator, momma, and me. Mr. Malt was unsatisfied with poppa's revenge on Bawlinbuttons, and proposed to make things awkward further for the guard. He said it could be done very simply, by a disagreement between himself and the Senator as to whether the windows should be open or shut. He said he had heard of a German guard put to the most enjoyable misery by such a dispute, not knowing the language of the disputants and being forced to arbitrate upon their respective demands. Mr. Malt had laughed at the Senator's joke, so the Senator, of course, had to assist at Mr. Malt's, and they began to work themselves up, as Mr. Malt said, into the spirit of it. Mr. Malt was to insist that the windows should

be shut, he said he *had* got a trifling cold, and the Senator was to require them open in the interests of ventilation. They rehearsed their arguments, and momma putting her head out of the window at the first small station cried, "Be quick and change your expressions —he's coming!"

In the presence of the guard Mr. Malt rose with dignity and closed the windows. The Senator, with a well-simulated scowl, at once opened them both.

"Stranger!" said Mr. Malt, while momma fumbled for her ticket, "I shut those windows."

"Sir," responded poppa, "if you had not done so I shouldn't have been obliged to open them."

"I can't die of pneumonia, sir," said Mr. Malt, again closing the window, "to oblige *you*."

"Nor do I feel compelled," returned the Senator furiously, "to asphyxiate my family to make it comfortable for you!" and the window fell with a bang.

The guard, holding out a massive hand for my ticket, took no notice whatever.

"Put it up again," said Mrs. Malt, who was more anxious than any of us to avenge herself upon the German railway system, "and try to break the glass."

"Attract his attention, Alexander," said momma. "Pull one of his silly buttons off."

The guard gave no sign—he was replacing the elastic round my book of coupons after detaching the green one on which was printed, "Strasburg nach Mainz."

Poppa and Mr. Malt were sitting opposite each other in the middle of the carriage.

"I tell you I've got bronchial trouble, and I won't be manslaughtered," cried Mr. Malt, hurling himself upon the strap, while poppa seized the guard by the arm and pointed to the closed window. The only foreign language with which poppa is acquainted is that used by the Indians on the banks of the Saguenay river, a few words of which he acquired while salmon fishing there two years ago. These he poured forth upon the guard —they were the only ones that occurred to him, he said —at the same time threatening with his disengaged fist bodily assault upon Mr. Malt.

"That ought to draw him," said Mrs. Malt.

It did draw him.

"Leave go!" he said to poppa, and his air of authority was such that poppa left go. "Is this here a lunatic party, or a young menagerie, or what? Now look here," he continued, taking Mr. Malt by the elbow and seating him with some violence in a corner seat and shutting the window. "If you've got eight tickets for yourself say so, if you haven't that's as much an' more than you are entitled to. The other gentleman——" But the Senator had already collapsed into the furthest corner and was looking fixedly through the closed glass. "Well, all I've got to say is," he went on, lowering that window with decision, "that you can't go kickin' up rows in this country same as you do at home, an' if you can't get along more satisfactory together I'll——"

here something interrupted him, requiring to be transferred from the Senator's hand to the nearest convenient pocket. "As I was goin' to say, gentlemen, there isn't any what you might call strict rule about the windows, an' as far as I'm concerned, you can settle it for yourselves."

Whereupon he swung along to the next carriage, the train having started, and left us to reflect on the incongruity of an English railway guard in Germany.

It was curious, but the incident left behind it a certain coolness, so well defined that when momma suggested that the Malts' window should be lowered as it was before to give us a current of air, Mrs. Malt said she thought it would be better to abide by the decision of the guard, now that we had referred it to him, and momma said, "Oh dear me, yes," if she preferred to do so, and everybody established the most aggressively private relations with books and newspapers. It was quite a relief when Mrs. Portheris came at the next station to inquire whether, if we had no married Germans in our compartment, we could possibly make room for Isabel. Mrs. Portheris had married Germans in her compartment, two pairs of them, and she could no longer permit her daughter to observe their behaviour. "They obtrude their domestic relations," said Mrs. Portheris, "in the most disgusting way. They are continually patting each other. Quite middle-aged, too! And calling each other 'Leibchen,' and other things which may be worse. My poor Isabel is dreadfully embarrassed,

for, of course, she can't always look out of the window. And as she understands the language, I can't possibly tell *what* she may overhear!"

We made room for Isabel, but the train to Mayence was crowded that day, and before we arrived we had ample reason to believe that conjugal affection is not only at home but abroad in Germany. The Senator, at one point, threatened to travel on the engine to avoid it. He used, I think the language of exaggeration about it. He said it was the most objectionable article made in Germany. But I did not notice that Isabel devoted herself at all seriously to looking out of the window.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"He tells me," said Miss Callis, "that you are to give him his answer at Cologne."

"Does he, indeed?" said I. We were floating down the Rhine in the society of our friends, two hundred and fifty other floaters, and a string band. We had left the battlements of Bingen, and the Mouse Tower was in sight. As we had already acquired the legend, and were sitting behind the smoke stack, there was no reason why we should not discuss Mr. Mafferton.

"I suppose he does not, by any chance, mention an alternative lady," I said carelessly.

"I don't know," said Miss Callis, "that I should be disposed to listen to him if he did. He would have to put it in some other light."

"Why should you object?" I asked. "Isabel is quite a proper person to marry him. Much more so, I often think, than I."

"Oh!" said Miss Callis without meaning to. "I think he has outgrown that taste. In fact, he told me so."

"He is for ever seeking a fresh bosom for a confidence!" I cried.

Miss Callis looked at me with more interest than she would have wished to express.

"What do you really think of him?" she asked. "I sometimes feel as if I had known you for years," and she took my hand.

I gave hers a gentle pressure, and edged a little nearer. "He has good shoulders," I remarked critically.

"You would hardly marry him for his *shoulders!*"

"It doesn't seem quite enough," I admitted, "but then—his information is always so accurate."

"If you think you would like living with an encyclopedia." Miss Callis had begun to look embarrassed by my hand, but I still permitted it to nestle confidingly in hers.

"He pronounces all his g's," I said, "and—did you ever see him in a silk hat?"

"I don't think you are really attached to him, dear." (The "dear" was a really creditable sacrifice to the situation.)

"I sometimes think," I murmured, "that one never knows one's own heart until some sudden circumstance puts it to the test. Now if I had a rival—in you, for instance—and I suddenly saw myself losing—but, of course, that is impossible so far as you are concerned. Because of the Count."

"The Count isn't in it," said Miss Callis firmly. "At least at present."

"But," I protested, "somebody must provide for

him! I was so happy in the thought that you had undertaken it."

Miss Callis gave me back my hand. She looked as if she would have liked to throw it overboard.

"As you say," she said, "it is a little difficult to make up one's mind. Don't you think those rocks to the right may be the Lorelei? I must go and tell Mrs. Malt. She won't be fit to travel with for a week if she misses the Lorelei." And Miss Callis left me to reflect upon the inconsistencies of my sex.

"Do you realise," said Dicky, as, with an assumed air of nonchalance, he sauntered up and took her chair, "that we shall be in Cologne in five hours?"

"Fateful Cologne," I said. "There are Roman remains, I believe, as well as the Cathedral and the scent. Also a Museum of Industrial Art, but we'll skip that."

"We'll skip all of it," replied Mr. Dod, with determination, "you and I and Isabel. The train for Paris leaves at nine precisely."

"Haven't you made up your minds to let me off," I pleaded. "I am sure you would be happier alone. It's so unusual to elope with two ladies."

"You don't seem to realise how Isabel has been brought up," Dicky returned patiently. "She can't travel alone with me, don't you see, until we are married. Afterwards she'll chaperone you back to your party again. So it will be all right for *you*, don't you see?"

I was obliged to say I saw, and we arranged the de-

tails. We would reach Cologne about six, and Isabel and I, who would share a room as usual, were secretly to pack one bag between us, which Dicky would smuggle out of the hotel and send to the station. Isabel was to be fatigued and dine in her room; I was to leave the *table d'hôte* early to solace her, Dicky was to dine at a *café* and meet us at the station. We would put out the lights and lock the door of the apartment on our departure, and the chambermaid with hot water in the morning would be the first to discover our flight. We only regretted that we could not be there to see the astonishment of the chambermaid. "I won't fail you," I assured Mr. Dod, "but what about Isabel? Isabel is essential; in fact, I won't consent to this elopement without her."

"Isabel," said Dicky dubiously, "is all right, so far as her intentions go. But she'd be the better for a little stiffening. Would you mind——"

I groaned in spirit, but went in search of Isabel, thinking of phrases that might stiffen her. I found her looking undecided, with a pencil and a slip of paper.

"How lucky you are," I said diplomatically, sinking into the nearest chair, "to be going to wind up your trip on the Continent in such a delightful way. It will be —ah—something to remember all your life."

"Oh, I suppose so," said Isabel plaintively, "but I should *so* much prefer to be done in church. If mamma would only consent!"

"She never would," I declared, for I felt that I

must see Isabel Mrs. Dod within the next day or two at all costs.

"A registry office sounds so uninteresting. I suppose one just goes—as one is."

"I don't think veils and trains are worn," I observed, "except by persons of high rank who do not approve of the marriage service. I don't know what the Marquis of Queensberry might do, or Mr. Grant Allen."

"Of course, the ceremony doesn't matter to *them*," replied Isabel intelligently, "because they would just wear morning dress *anywhere*."

"Looking at it that way, they haven't much to lose," I conceded.

"And no wedding cake," grieved Isabel, "and no reception at the house of the bride's mother. And you can't have your picture in the *Queen*."

"There would be a difficulty," I said, "about the descriptive part."

"And no favours for the coachman, and no trousseau——"

"I wonder," I said, "whether, under those circumstances, it's really worth while."

"Oh, well!" said Isabel.

"It's a night to Paris, and a morning to Dover," I said. "We will wait for the others at Dover—I fancy they'll hurry—that'll be another day. I'll take one *robe de nuit*, Isabel, three pocket handkerchiefs, one brush and comb, and tooth brush. You shall have all the rest of the bag."

"You are a perfect love," exclaimed Miss Portheris, with the most touching gratitude.

"We will share the soap," I continued, "until you are married. Afterwards——"

"Oh, you can have it then," said Isabel, "of course," and she looked at the Castle of Rheinfels and blushed beautifully.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"THERE was only one thing that disappointed me," Mrs. Malt was saying at the dinner table of the Cologne hotel, "and that wasn't so much what you would call a disappointment as a surprise. White windows-blinds in a robber castle on the Rhine I did not expect to see."

I slipped away before momma had time to announce and explain her disappointments, but I heard her begin. Then I felt safe, for criticism of the Rhine is absorbing matter for coversation. The steamer's custom of giving one stewed plums with chicken is an affront to civilisation to last a good twenty minutes by myself. I tried to occupy and calm Isabel's mind with it as we walked over to the station, under the twin towers of the Cathedral, but with indifferent success. To add to her agitation at this crisis of her life, the top button came off her glove, and when that happened I felt the inutility of words.

We passed the policemen on the Cathedral square with affected indifference. We believed we were not liable to arrest, but policemen, when one is eloping, have a forbidding look. We refrained, by mutual arrangement, from turning once to look back for possible pur-

suers, but that is not a thing I would undertake to do again under similar circumstances. We even had the hardihood to buy a box of chocolates on the way, that is, Isabel bought them, while I watched current events at the confectioner's door. The station was really only about seven minutes' walk from the hotel, but it seemed an hour before I was able to point out Dicky, alert and expectant, on the edge of the platform behind the line of cabs.

"So near the fulfilment of his hopes, poor fellow," I remarked.

"Yes," concurred Isabel, "but do you know I almost wish he wasn't coming."

"Don't tell him so, whatever you do," I exclaimed. "I know Dicky's sensitive nature, and it is just as likely as not that he would take you at your word. And I will not elope with you alone."

I need not have been alarmed. Isabel had no intention of reducing the party at the last moment. I listened for protests and hesitations when they met, but all I heard was, "*Have* you got the bag?"

Dicky had the bag, the tickets, the places, everything. He had already assumed, though only a husband of to-morrow, the imperative and responsible connection with Isabel's arrangements. He told her she was to sleep with her head toward the engine, that she was to drink nothing but soda-water at any of the stations, and that she must not, on any account, leave the carriage when we changed for Paris until he came for her. It would

be my business to see that these instructions were carried out.

"What shall I do," I asked, "if she cries in the night?"

But Dicky was sweeping us toward the waiting-room, and did not hear me. He placed us carefully in the seats nearest the main door, which opened upon the departure platform, full of people hurrying to and fro, and of the more leisurely movement of shunting trains. The lamps were lighted, though twilight still hung about; the scene was pleasantly exciting. I said to Isabel that I never thought I should enjoy an elopement so much.

"*I* shall enjoy settling down," she replied thoughtfully. "Dicky has promised me that all the china shall be hand-painted."

"You won't mind my leaving you for five seconds," said Mr. Dod, suddenly exploring his breast-pocket; "the train doesn't leave for a quarter of an hour yet, and I find I haven't a smoke about me," and he opened the door.

"Not more that five seconds then," I said, for nothing is more trying to the nerves than to wait for a train which is due in a few minutes and a man who is buying cigars at the same time.

Dicky left the door open, and that was how I heard a strangely familiar voice, with an inflexion of enforced calm and repression, suddenly address him from behind it.

"*Good evening, Dod!*"

I did not shriek, or even grasp Isabel's hand. I simply got up and stood a little nearer the door. But I have known few moments so electrical.

"My dear chap, how *are* you?" exclaimed Dicky. "How are you? Staying in Cologne? I'm just off to Paris."

I thought I heard a heavy sigh, but it was somewhat lost in the trundling of the porters' trucks.

"Then," said Arthur Page, for I had not been deceived, "it is as I supposed."

"What did you suppose, old chap?" asked Dicky in a joyous and expansive tone.

"You do not go alone?"

The bitterness of this was not a thing that could be communicated to paper and ink.

"Why, no," said Dicky, "the fact is——"

I saw the wave—it was characteristic—with which Mr. Page stopped him. "I have been made acquainted with the facts," he said. "Do not dwell upon them. I do not, cannot, blame you, if you have really won her heart."

"So far as I know," said Dicky, with some hauteur, "there's nothing in it to give *you* the hump."

"Why waste time in idle words?" replied Arthur. "You will lose your train. I could never forgive myself if I were the cause of that."

"You won't be," said Dicky sententiously, looking at his watch.

"But I must ask—must demand—the privilege of

one parting word," said Arthur firmly. "Do not be apprehensive of any painful scene. I desire only to wish her every happiness, and to bid her farewell."

Mr. Dod, though on the eve of his wedding day, was not wholly oblivious of the love affairs of other people. I could see a new-born and overwhelming comprehension of the situation in his face as he put his head in at the door and beckoned to Isabel. Evidently he could not trust himself to speak.

"Miss Portheris," he said, with magnificent self-control, "Mr. Page. Mr. Page would like to wish you every happiness and to bid you farewell, Isabel, and I don't see why he shouldn't. We have still five minutes."

There are limits to the propriety of all practical jokes, and I walked out at once to assure Arthur that his misunderstanding was quite natural, and somewhat less exquisitely humorous than Mr. Dod appeared to find it.

"I am merely eloping too," I said, "in case anything should happen to Isabel." Realising that this was also being misinterpreted, I added, "She is not accustomed to travelling alone."

We had shaken hands, and that always makes a situation more normal, but there was still plainly an enormous amount to clear up, and painfully little time to do it in, though Dicky with great consideration immediately put Isabel into the carriage and followed her to its remotest corner, leaving me standing at the door, and Arthur holding it open. The second bell rang as I learned from Mr. Page that the Pattersons had gone

to Newport this summer, and that it was extremely hot in New York when he left. As the guard came along the platform shutting up the doors of the train, Arthur's agitation increased, and I saw that his customary suffering in connection with me, was quite as great as anybody could desire. The guard had skipped our carriage, but it was already vibrating in departure—creaking—moving. I looked at Arthur in a manner—I confess it—which annihilated our two months of separation.

"Then since you're not going to marry Dod," he inquired breathlessly, walking along with the train—"I've heard various reports—whom, may I ask, *are* you going to marry?"

"Why, nobody," I said, "unless——"

"Well, I should think so!" ejaculated Arthur, and in spite of the frightful German language used by the guard, he jumped into the carriage.

He has maintained ever since that he was obliged to do it in order to explain his presence on the platform, which was, of course, carrying the matter to its logical conclusion. It seemed that the Senator had advised him to come over and meet us accidentally in Venice, where he had intimated that reunion would be only a question of privacy and a full moon. On his arrival at Venice—it was *his* gondola that we shared—the Senator had discouraged him for the moment, and had since constantly telegraphed him that the opportune moment had not yet arrived. Finally poppa had written to say that, though



"Whom *are* you going to marry?"

he grieved to announce that I was engaged to Dicky, and he could not guarantee any disengagement, he was still operating to that end. This, however, precipitated Mr. Page to Cologne, where observation of our movements at a distance brought him to the wrong conclusion, but fortunately to the right platform. As Isabel remarked, if such things were put in books nobody would believe them.

It seemed quite unreasonable and absurd when we talked it over that Arthur and I should travel from Cologne to Dover merely to witness the nuptials of Dicky and Isabel. As Dicky pointed out, moreover, our moral support when it came to the interview with Mrs. Portheris would be much more valuable if it were united. There would be the registrar—one registrar would do—and there would be the opportunity of making it a square party. These were Dicky's arguments; Arthur's were more personal but equally convincing, and I must admit that I thought a good deal of the diplomatic anticipation of that magnificent wedding which was to illustrate and adorn the survival of the methods of the Doge of Venice in the family of a Senator of Chicago. And thus it was that we were all married sociably together in Dover the following morning, despatching a telegram immediately afterwards to the Senator at the Cologne hotel as follows:

"We have eloped.

"(Signed) R. and I. Dod.

"A. and M. Page."

Later on in the day we added details, to show that we bore no malice, and announced that we were prepared to await the arrival of the rest of the party for any length of time at Dover.

We even went down to the station to meet them, where recriminations and congratulations were so mingled that it was impossible, for some time, to tell whether we were most blessed or banned. Even in the confusion of the moment, however, I noticed that Mr. Mafferton made Miss Callis's baggage his special care, and saw clearly in the cordiality of her sentiments toward me, and the firmness of her manner in ordering him about, that the future peer had reached his last alternative.

I rejoice to add that the day also showed that even Count Filgiatti had fallen, in the general ordering of fates, upon happiness with honour. I noticed that Emmeline vigorously protected him from the Customs officer who wished to confiscate his cigarettes, and I mentioned her air of proprietorship to her father.

"Why, yes," said Mr. Malt, "he offered himself as a count you see, and Emmeline seemed to think she'd like to have one, so I closed with him. There isn't anythink likely to come of it for three or four years, but he's willing to wait, and she's got to grow."

I expressed my felicitations, and Mr. Malt added somewhat regretfully that it would have been better if he'd had more in his clothes, but that was what you had to expect with counts; as a rule they didn't seem to have what you might call any money use for pockets.

In the meantime they were taking him home to educate him in the duties of American citizenship. Emmeline put it to me briefly, "I'm not any Daisy Miller," she said, "and I prefer to live out of Rome."

Once a year the present Lady Mafferton invites Mrs. Portheris to tea, and I know they discuss my theory of engagements in a critical spirit. We have never seen either Miss Nancy or Miss Cora Bingham again, and I should have forgotten the names of Mr. Pabbley and Mr. Hinkson by this time if I had not written them down in earlier chapters. Arthur and I have not yet made up our minds to another visit to England. We have several friends there, however, whom we appreciate exceedingly, in spite, as we often say to one another, of their absurd and deplorable accent.

THE END.

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